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# PLUCK AND LUCK

FRED LENOIR,  
OR, STIRRING SCENES IN THE SOUTH.

*By HOWARD AUSTIN.*



The robbers, burying spurs in their horses' sides, dashed at the gate like hawks swooping on their prey. But they were too late, for Fred slammed the gate in their very faces, with not a second to spare.

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# PLUCK AND LUCK

## Stories of Adventure.

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# FRED LENOIR

OR,

## STRIKING SCENES IN THE SOUTH

By HOWARD AUSTIN

### CHAPTER I.

#### THE DEED OF A DESPERADO.

One starlight night in the year 1835, the Sultana, then the finest boat on the western waters, was gliding swiftly over the broad bosom of the Mississippi River some two hundred miles above New Orleans.

It was near midnight, but in the gentlemen's cabin six or eight different games of cards were in progress, and a number of passengers were sauntering about chatting, drinking, smoking or watching the players.

There was a confused sound of voices calling for drinks, making bets or jesting, and occasionally an emphatic oath or burst of laughter.

It was such a scene as might be witnessed any night on a Mississippi River steamboat, and few would have suspected that in spite of general gaiety a tragedy was making head.

Seated at one of the small tables were two men engaged in a game of single-handed poker, and betting heavily.

One of them was Colonel Robert Lenoir, a cotton-planter, and the other, Bill Brian, a notorious gambler and desperado.

Colonel Lenoir lost bet after bet, and felt confident that he was being cheated, but naught save a compression of his lips, a slight quiver of his heavy whiskers, and the intentness with which he watched every movement of his antagonist betrayed his feelings.

His apparent calmness, however, was like the death-like stillness before a tempest bursts forth; every nerve was tense, and he was alert and ready for action as the panther, when, with arched back and quivering tail, it crouches to spring on its prey.

At length detecting Brian in an attempt to palm a card, Colonel Lenoir, quick as thought, drew a bowie-knife, and drove it through the gambler's hand, nailing it to the table.

Uttering a horrid imprecation, Brian, with his other hand, jerked out a Derringer pistol, thrust it almost into Colonel Lenoir's face and pulled the trigger, but at that instant some

one knocked up the muzzle of the weapon, and the bullet buried itself in the ceiling.

Dropping the discharged pistol, Brian drew another, but before he could use it some of the bystanders wrenched it out of his hand and held him fast.

"Hang you!" he roared, glaring at Colonel Lenoir, "I'll have your life for this!"

Without replying to the gambler's threat, Colonel Lenoir said to the passengers, who were crowding around the table:

"Gentlemen, I wish you to see for yourselves that the rascal was trying to steal a card."

He then withdrew the knife, and beneath Brian's hand was found the ace of diamonds.

"The card dropped out of the deck, and I was just going to put it back," swore Brian.

"You are a liar," replied Colonel Lenoir, contemptuously.

"You wouldn't say that if I had a fair chance."

"You can have all the chance you desire."

"Then I demand satisfaction."

"I'm at your service when and where you will."

"Well, let us land at the next wood yard, and settle the matter with pistols."

"What is the use of putting it off? The hurricane deck will do as well as the shore."

"I'm ready."

"Name your second, then, the sooner the affair is over the better."

About this time the captain of the Sultana came into the cabin, and finding out what was going on, joined with the more respectable portion of the passengers in protesting against Colonel Lenoir fighting a man of Brian's character.

But the colonel's blood was up, and he answered their arguments by saying:

"I will not fight on the boat if the captain objects to it, but this affair has gone too far to be settled in any other way, and besides, I think that a man who is good enough to play cards with, is good enough to shoot."



This sentiment was received with decided approbation, not only by the blacklegs, of whom there was a considerable number on board, but by many of the other passengers, for at the time I write of, duelling was common, and the social standing of an antagonist was not regarded as a matter of so much importance as it is now.

Seeing how matters were, the captain said:

"Well, if you will fight, I can't help it."

"Of course not," replied Colonel Lenoir; "so you had as well come along, and see fair play."

"Oh, certainly; I can do no good by staying away. I wonder if there is a surgeon on board? The pistols may have some work for him to do."

"Allow me to offer my services," said a smooth oily-looking man, whose swarthy complexion and coal-black hair contrasted oddly with his yellowish-gray, cat-like eyes. "I am a doctor."

Colonel Lenoir gave a sudden start, eyed the speaker keenly, and said:

"Excuse me, but I would like to know your name."

"Cushion, sir, Noah Cushion," replied the doctor, whose eyes dropped beneath the steady scrutiny he was subjected to.

"Where are you from?"

"Ohio."

"Have you ever lived in Louisiana?"

"Never; this is my first trip to the South."

"Strange!" Colonel Lenoir muttered; "I would have sworn that I knew that voice."

"It is more than probable that you have heard me talking," suggested the doctor, "as we have both been on the boat ever since she left Louisville."

"That may account for my fancy; but in any event, this is no time to discuss the matter."

Colonel and Brian then selected their seconds, who withdrew to the other end of the cabin to agree upon the terms of the fight.

Walking to the clerk's office, Colonel Lenoir wrote a short note, and asked the captain of the boat to accompany him to his stateroom.

Soon as they entered it and closed the door, the colonel put the note into a money-belt which was buckled around his waist, under his clothes, and said:

"Captain, you know my son Fred?"

"Very well."

"If I am killed, manage to be left alone with my body, take possession of this belt, and without examining its contents, deliver it to him privately."

"I'll do it. But why not give me the belt now? If you come out all right, I'll return it to you."

"No; I'll not part with it even for an instant, if I can help it."

"All right, just as you please."

They then returned to the cabin, and in company with Brian, the two seconds and the rest of the passengers, ascended to the hurricane deck.

Brian was placed at the stern of the boat, and Colonel Lenoir ten paces in front of him, while the spectators ranged themselves in two lines on either side.

There was no moon, but the stars and the lamps in the pilot house made everything on the deck plainly discernible.

A pistol, loaded and cocked, was handed to each one of the principals, and Colonel Lenoir's second said:

"Gentlemen, I will give the word as follows: One—two—three, and you are to fire after the word one, and before the word three. Are you ready?"

He had scarcely ceased speaking when Brian, without waiting for the word, raised his pistol, fired at Colonel Lenoir, and immediately leaped headlong into the river.

The bullet sped true to its mark, and Colonel Lenoir fell forward on his face, while mingled cries of rage and execration arose from the astonished spectators.

Some rushed forward and raised the fallen man, who was found to be bleeding profusely, and bore him down to the cabin.

Others crowded together at the stern of the boat and drew their pistols, in hopes of getting a chance to shoot Brian; several fancying that they saw him come up in the foaming wake of the steamer, fired, but the majority were of the opinion that he was not seen.

The captain was asked to have the boat stopped and put back, but he said:

"It would do no good, the boat was within two hundred yards of the shore and running under a full head of steam when the rascal jumped off, and he can readily swim ashore before we can round to and return."

"Perhaps he was killed or disabled by the shock when he struck the water," remarked one of the passengers.

"Not a bit of it," replied the captain, confidently, "the fellow has as many lives as a cat, and he will never be drowned, for he was born to be hung."

With this they descended to the cabin, anxious to ascertain how it fared with Colonel Lenoir.

## CHAPTER II.

### ROBBERY.

When Colonel Lenoir was carried from the hurricane deck down into the cabin, it was found that the ball from Brian's pistol had passed through his left shoulder, breaking the shoulder-blade.

He was laid on a table, and remained unconscious while his coat and vest were being removed, but revived as his shirt was about to be taken off, and requested that the sleeves should be cut away, and the rest of the garment allowed to remain on him.

His wish was of course complied with, and Dr. Cushion proceeded to bandage the wound, and announced that if inflammation did not set in, there was no serious result to be feared.

Colonel Lenoir was then put to bed in his stateroom, and a dose of laudanum given him.

Dr. Cushion volunteered to sit up with the wounded man, and the other passengers, after some conversation about the late occurrence, gradually dropped off to their staterooms.

Notwithstanding the opiate which he had taken, Colonel Lenoir was kept awake by excitement, and the pain of his wounded shoulder.

Anxious to sleep, and thus forget the pain, and aware that if he did not keep still, the laudanum would have an exciting, instead of soothing effect, he, for some time, lay perfectly motionless, with his eyes closed.

At length happening to open his eyes, he saw his clothes, which had been thrown over the back of a chair, in the hands of Dr. Cushion, who was cautiously examining them.

Seeing that he was observed, the doctor put down the clothes rather hastily, and said:

"I—I was looking at the holes made in your coat by the bullet."

"They are pretty large, I reckon," answered the colonel, in a drowsy tone.

"Rather," was the reply.

Nothing more was said at the time. Dr. Cushion leaned back in his chair, and Colonel Lenoir again closed his eyes and lay still.



But the colonel no longer desired to sleep. He determined to remain awake and watch Dr. Cushion.

Several times he opened his eyes cautiously, but on each occasion he saw the doctor sitting motionless as a statue, and watching him closely.

After awhile, however, Colonel Lenoir, against his will, yielded to the drowsy feeling produced by the laudanum, and fell asleep.

A look of satisfaction crept over Dr. Cushion's countenance when he heard the deep, regular breathing of the wounded man, but for some time he did not move.

Finally the sound of the boat's bell was heard, and a few minutes afterwards a cessation of the jarring motion indicated that the engines had stopped working.

Dr. Cushion stealthily arose to his feet, softly pushed back the sliding door of the stateroom which opened on the guards, looked out, and saw that the boat had landed at a wood yard.

After casting a quick look at the bed, he commenced to search the pockets of Colonel Lenoir's clothes.

He had just got possession of a large pocket-book, and was in the act of putting it in his pocket, when the colonel awakened, saw what was going on, reached out of the bed, and seized hold of him.

In an instant Dr. Cushion whipped out a keen two-edged dagger, turned half around so as to face the colonel, and, in a low, determined voice, said:

"Let me go, and keep quiet, or you are a dead man."

But Colonel Lenoir was not a man to be intimidated; he tightened his grasp, and shouted:

"Help—help! murder!"

The cries rang through the boat with startling distinctness, and the sound of doors hastily opened, and the noise of footsteps hurrying towards the colonel's stateroom were heard.

"Hang you, take that, then," hissed the doctor, striking at the broad breast of the colonel with the dagger.

Colonel Lenoir writhed his body to one side, and the keen blade found a bloodless sheath in the mattress.

Without attempting to repeat the blow, Dr. Cushion wrenched himself loose, and with the dagger still in his hand sprang through the door on the guards, and darted towards the bow of the boat.

Almost at the same moment, the other door of the stateroom, which opened into the cabin, was shoved back, and the captain of the boat and several passengers made their appearance.

"What's the matter?" asked the captain.

"The doctor has robbed and attempted to murder me," replied the colonel.

"Where is he?"

"He went out of that door."

"Then I am afraid he will escape, for the boat is tied up at a wood-yard."

The captain then sprang out on the guards, and ran towards the bow of the boat, shouting:

"Stop that man—don't let any one go ashore!"

In the meantime, Dr. Cushion had reached the front part of the boat, and descended to the lower deck with the intention of going ashore.

A staging, or gang-plank had been run out, and the negro deck-hands, superintended by the mate of the boat, were taking on a supply of wood for fuel.

The mate hearing the captain shout "stop that man!" seized Dr. Cushion just as he put his foot on the gang-plank.

Dr. Cushion knew that he did not have a moment to spare, and without uttering a word, he plunged his dagger to the hilt in the mate's throat.

Then brandishing the dagger in his hand, the doctor

passed through the crowd of horrified negro deck-hands, who gave way before him, reached the shore, ascended the bank, and disappeared in the woods.

No pursuit was attempted, for it would have been useless; in the dense forest which surrounded the wood-yard, the fugitive could readily have eluded a thousand men.

The killing of the mate caused intense excitement on the boat, but as nothing could be done to arrest the murderer, the captain, after giving directions for the proper care of the corpse, which he intended to carry to New Orleans for burial, returned to Colonel Lenoir.

After informing him about the murder of the mate, the captain said:

"You seemed suspicious about that infernal doctor from the first."

"Yes; his voice reminded me of a scoundrel whom I have good cause to remember."

"I dare say that he was the man you thought of disguised."

"No, I think not."

"Why, he has proved himself to be a desperate rascal!"

"Certainly; but the man I allude to would have been a thousand times more eager to take my life than my money."

"He tried to take both."

"I don't think that he would have attempted to kill me, if I had not seized hold of him."

"Perhaps you are right; but whoever he is, I would give a thousand dollars to have hold of him."

"What would you do with him? Hand him over to the authorities for trial?"

"No, sir; I would have him strung up by the neck to the top of the flag-staff at the bow, and let him swing there until we land at New Orleans."

Colonel Lenoir's opinion about Dr. Cushion would have been very much changed if he could have seen what that individual did, and heard what he said after leaving the boat.

Soon as the doctor got well into the shelter of the woods, he stopped and listened to ascertain if he was pursued.

When he became satisfied that he was not followed, he struck through the forest with a confidence and directness of purpose which indicated that he was familiar with the locality.

After proceeding about two miles through the trackless woods, occasionally looking at the stars, to see that he was keeping in the right course, he halted.

Feeling about on the ground, he collected a few dry leaves, lit them with a match, and by adding fallen branches and pieces of half-decayed wood, soon had a brisk fire.

Then squatting down close to the blaze so as to have the full advantage of the light, he drew out Colonel Lenoir's pocket-book, and began to examine it.

The book contained a considerable sum in bank notes, and a small amount in gold and silver.

The doctor thrust the money into his pocket without counting it, and continued to examine the book.

Three times he looked through every part of it, but finding nothing more, ground his teeth together, and exclaimed:

"Hang it, the paper is not here."

Then, as if struck by a sudden thought, he pulled out the bank notes, and with feverish haste separated them one by one, but did not discover anything among them.

Nor was he more successful when, a moment later, he grabbed the pocket-book with the eagerness of a drowning man clutching at a straw, ripped the covering from the lining, and picked it to pieces.

"A thousand furies!" he cried, when the search was finished, springing up erect, and grinding the fragments of the pocket-book into the ground with his heel.



Yielding to a fit of uncontrollable rage, he strode to and fro, clenching his fists, beating his breast, and ever and anon giving vent to his feelings in oaths and broken exclamations.

"Fool—fool that I was not to drive my dagger into his heart, and search his body. Never—no, not if I live for a hundred years, will I have such a chance again. The game was in my hands, and, like an infernal idiot, I threw it away."

After awhile he grew calmer, and stood still for some time, with folded arms, immersed in deep thought.

"No," he at length muttered, "I ought not to have killed him; I would have balked myself of the best part of my revenge. He shall die by my hand, but not until he is steeped to the lips in disgrace, his haughty spirit humbled, and his proud heart broken."

Chuckling with fiendish glee at the picture his fancy painted, the doctor scattered the burning brands so that the fire would die out, and strode away through the forest.

And out of a thicket near at hand, a long, dark body crept, and swiftly, but noiseless as a shadow—glided after him.

It was an enormous panther which was attracted by the scent of the murdered mate's blood on the dagger, but had been deterred by the fire from springing on the doctor.

But now that his intended victim had left the fire, the panther saw nothing to prevent him from quenching his burning thirst. His green eyes glared savagely, his ears were laid back upon his neck, and crouching close to the ground he rapidly gained on the doctor, who little dreamed of the terrible peril which threatened him.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE FIRST BLOOD—WEAVING THE WEB—ATTACKED BY HIGHWAYMEN.

Twenty-three years previous to the time mentioned in the preceding chapters, Juan Alva, a wealthy Louisiana planter of Spanish descent, died, leaving one child, a daughter, named Catalina.

He bequeathed all of his property to his daughter, and in his will, directed that if she died unmarried or childless, that the estate should go to his brother Gomez, and his heirs.

Gomez Alva had two grown sons, Pedro and Garcia, and as their Cousin Catalina was a beauty, as well as an heiress, first one and then the other courted her.

But they had a formidable rival in Colonel Robert Lenoir, then a gay young bachelor, who wooed and finally won the young lady.

The principal portion of the property left by Juan Alva was in St. Charles Parish, fifty miles above New Orleans, but the family mansion stood embowered in orange groves, on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain, a short distance from the city.

It was a delightful residence, and thither Colonel Robert Lenoir went to live with his bride, after their marriage.

Gomez Alva lived near by, but as he and his sons were very sore about the loss of Catalina and her fortune, there was very little intercourse between them and Colonel Lenoir.

More than a year passed, and as Mrs. Lenoir had no child, the Alva family began to speculate upon the probability of their inheriting the estate after all.

But their hopes were dashed to the ground, when at the expiration of the second year, Colonel Lenoir's wife gave birth to a son, who was named Frederic, and thrived finely.

Mrs. Lenoir lived some five years longer, but was not blessed with any more offspring.

In the meantime, Gomez Alva became very much embarrassed pecuniarily, and his sons, Pedro and Garcia, acquired an unenviable notoriety by their idle and dissolute habits.

Gomez Alva and his sons had of course looked upon little Fred Lenoir with an evil eye from the time of his birth, but

after his mother's death they hated him with ten-fold intensity, for they reflected that but for him, they would have been in possession of a princely fortune.

Bitterly did they regret that they had not managed to put Fred out of the way before his mother's death, but to kill him after that happened, would have availed them nothing, for according to a well-known principle in law, his surviving his mother, even for a single minute, was sufficient to make the title to the property rest in him, and then if he died, it would pass to his father.

But Gomez Alva and his sons had brooded over the matter, until they actually felt as if they had been defrauded of their rights, and were ready to go to any length to obtain the coveted property; and unfortunately, there was one in Colonel Lenoir's household, who was easily induced to aid them in their villainous schemes.

This person was a quadroon woman named Maria, who was Mrs. Lenoir's waiting-maid, and after her death became the nurse of little Fred.

She knew how to read and write, had the cunning, treacherous disposition so often found with mixed blood, and was so fair that not one out of a hundred would have detected the hidden blemish.

Pedro Alva managed to see her privately, and, by promising to give her a considerable sum of money, and send her to the north, where she would be free, readily persuaded her to do his bidding.

He then gave her a bunch of false keys, and told her to steal the title-deeds and other papers in Colonel Lenoir's safe, and to bring them and Fred Lenoir to a place near at hand, a little after dark, on the third evening from that time.

That very night Maria went into the library after the other inmates of Colonel Lenoir's house had retired, opened the safe, took out a tin box containing the papers, and hid it in a secret place, intending to get it when she was ready to leave.

If Maria had taken the papers and left the box, the theft would probably not have been discovered for some time.

But happening to open the safe two days afterwards to get an account book, Colonel Lenoir at once missed the box.

Colonel Lenoir was very much disturbed by the discovery, and commenced a searching investigation to find out the thief.

Maria became very much frightened, and though she took Fred Lenoir with her that evening, and met Pedro Alva, according to agreement, she did not dare carry the papers.

On ascertaining this fact, Pedro, who was waiting for her with a carriage, wanted her to stay at home, until she could bring the papers.

But Maria said that if he did not carry her away then, she would not have anything further to do with the matter.

So Pedro, who was very anxious to get possession of Fred, took her and the child into the carriage, and drove to New Orleans, and on the way, inquired particularly about where the papers were hid, intending to get them himself.

About ten o'clock that night, Colonel Lenoir missed Fred and Maria, and after searching the grounds around the house and in the immediate neighborhood without getting any clew, sent a message to his brother Tom, who practiced law in New Orleans, asking his advice and assistance.

Tom Lenoir at once notified the police to be on the lookout for the woman and child, and went out to Colonel Lenoir's with two detectives.

He assisted in the search, which was continued all night, and early in the morning started back to New Orleans.

On the road he met Pedro Alva, who having seen Maria off on a boat bound for Cincinnati, and left Fred with an Italian, who agreed to keep the child concealed, was now on his way



home to report progress to his father and brother Garcia. Tom Lenoir, suspecting that the Alvas had carried off Fred, stopped Pedro and began to question him.

The conversation soon assumed an angry character, and finally the two men drew their pistols and fired simultaneously.

Tom Lenoir escaped unhurt, but Pedro Alva fell dead with a bullet in his brain.

Hearing of Pedro's death, the Italian with whom Fred Lenoir was left abandoned the child on the street at night, and he was found a few hours afterwards by a policeman, and restored to his father.

The Alvas intended, if they got possession of Colonel Lenoir's son and papers, to institute a suit for the property left by his wife, and if that failed, to demand a large sum for the return of the child.

But this villainous scheme was nipped in the bud by the death of Pedro Alva, before he had a chance to tell his father and brother Garcia about the stealing and hiding of the papers, and the restoration of Fred to his father.

Tom Lenoir surrendered himself to the authorities, and was tried and acquitted for killing Pedro.

But about a week afterwards, having dined at Colonel Lenoir's, he was returning to the city alone, when a shot fired from an ambush laid him dead in the road.

Public opinion and circumstantial evidence pointed to Garcia Alva as the assassin, and he confirmed the belief in his guilt, but avoided the consequence by fleeing to Texas, which was then a favorite place of refuge for fugitives from justice.

Garcia Alva married a short time after Colonel Lenoir did, and when he fled to Texas left his wife, three sons, and a daughter with his father.

Not knowing what had become of Garcia, and being well aware that the hatred of the Alvas would embrace his whole family, Colonel Lenoir feared for the safety of his son, Fred, and brought him to New York soon after Tom Lenoir's death.

The feud between the Lenoirs and Alva families and their partisans was characterized by a ferocity which has rarely been equalled, and never surpassed.

Yet from the time Pedro Alva and Tom Lenoir were killed, for a period of over ten years no blood was shed in the quarrel.

This circumstance was attributable to the fact that Colonel Lenoir resided in New York most of the time, and Garcia Alva became the leader of a band of outlaws, and remained in Texas.

After this long interval of quiet, Colonel Lenoir was not disposed to renew the feud, but with the Alvas it was very different; they had the vindictive spirit of their Spanish ancestors, and one of the most remarkable traits of the Spaniards, is that nothing diverts them from their passions, neither time, nor outward circumstances; they march straight to their aim, and when it is once attained, they burst out as if the spark which had been smouldering in their bosoms was kindled there but that very moment.

At the commencement of the year 1835, the Regulators made Texas too hot for Garcia Alva and his band, and they fled to Louisiana, established themselves in the almost impenetrable swamps along the Mississippi River, and soon became a terror to the country.

Immediately after his return, Garcia, with some of his men, broke open Colonel Lenoir's residence on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain, and plundered it.

Gomez Alva, Garcia's father, was still alive, and the innate rascality of the hoary-headed old villain, and his hatred of the Lenoirs, had been intensified, rather than weakened by time.

Of course he and Garcia had a great deal to talk about, and among other things, he mentioned the fact that Father Hubert,

the priest who baptized Fred Lenoir, and Dr. Banks, who attended on his mother when he was born, had both been swept off by the yellow fever.

"Then you must go to New Orleans to-morrow," said Garcia, "and commence a suit against Robert Lenoir for the property which formerly belonged to his wife."

"Upon what pretense?" asked his father.

"Upon the ground that Fred is not the son of Mrs. Lenoir, but the child of Maria, the quadroon woman."

"But the proofs?"

"I'll furnish proof enough, never fear. Can you get me some papers in the handwriting of the priest and doctor?"

"There are some notes which were written by Father Hubert in the house now, and quite a bundle of dunning letters and bills for medical services from Dr. Banks."

"That's lucky; I have a man who can imitate any writing in the world. He will prepare all of the written evidence we think it safe to use, and I can furnish a dozen men who will swear through thick and thin to anything I tell them?"

"What shall I say to the lawyer?"

"Direct them to commence the suit, and tell him you will produce the necessary proof before the day of trial; that will give us time to prepare everything carefully."

"You had better go with me."

"No. I wish to conceal the fact that I have returned to the State; then I can work secretly and more effectively."

"It will be glorious if we succeed!" exclaimed old Alva, rubbing his hands.

"We are bound to succeed," asserted Garcia. "And won't Colonel Robert Lenoir howl!"

"We'll make a beggar of him."

"He will be branded as a swindler, and perhaps put into the penitentiary."

"The good name which his wife left will be dishonored."

"And Fred Lenoir will be our slave the moment we bamboozle a court into deciding that he has a drop of negro blood in his veins."

It was a late hour before the precious pair got through with their plotting, and next day Gomez Alva went to the city, employed a lawyer, and commenced the suit, by filing a petition in the court of the First Municipality.

Colonel Lenoir, who was in New York at the time, was promptly advised by his agent about the bringing of the suit, and the robbing of his house.

The colonel fully understood the magnitude of the danger which threatened him and his son, and all the lion in his nature was aroused.

After explaining the matter fully to Fred, he said:

"I shall return to Louisiana at once; this will be a life and death struggle, and will never end until the Alvas are wiped out, or I am done for. I will write to you regularly, and if I fall you must avenge me."

"I hope you don't think of leaving me in New York," replied Fred, who was now eighteen years of age.

"Yes, you had better remain here; the fight I am about to engage in will be no child's play."

"I am almost a man," said Fred, drawing himself up to his full height.

Colonel Lenoir's eye ran over the well-knit figure of his son with a gleam of pride, and placing his hand on the lad's shoulder, he said:

"You shall go with me, Fred, and we will stand or fall together."

No time was lost; the colonel purchased a good supply of arms, in which were included several pairs of revolvers, a weapon which was just invented, and with Fred departed for the South.

On arriving at New Orleans Colonel Lenoir was informed



by his lawyer that it was of the utmost importance to find Maria, and recover Fred's baptismal certificate, which was among the papers stolen by her.

Detectives were set to work, and after some weeks it was ascertained that the woman had gone to Cincinnati.

Colonel Lenoir thereupon sent Fred to his plantation, and went to Cincinnati, where he soon found Maria.

She was terribly alarmed when she saw her old master, for under the laws in force that time she could have been arrested as a fugitive slave, and carried back to Louisiana.

But on being promised her free-papers, she readily told where she had secreted the stolen papers, made an affidavit that Fred Lenoir was not her child, and agreed to go to New Orleans whenever notified to do so.

After making a memorandum of where her papers were hid, on the back of the affidavit, Colonel Lenoir placed it in a money belt which he kept buckled around his waist, and was on his way back home when he had the encounter with Brian on board the Sultana.

Having now briefly related the origin of the Lenoir and Alva feud, whose somber details, minutiae of horror and guilt, and tragic catastrophe will be found in the succeeding pages of this narrative, we will resume the direct thread of our story.

The day after Colonel Lenoir was shot, his wounded shoulder was in a very favorable condition, and about dark that evening he went ashore at Guion's landing, which is on the eastern bank of the river, some fifty miles above New Orleans.

He found his son Fred waiting for him, with a carriage drawn by a fine pair of bays, which were driven by a stout young mulatto man named Bandy.

"Father, what is the matter with your arm?" asked Fred, when their first greeting was finished.

"I had a bullet put through my shoulder, but I'll tell you all about it as we go home," replied the colonel, who then turned to the mulatto, and shaking hands with him, said: "How are you, Bandy. They have made you carriage driver, have they?"

"I'se only dribin' for dis 'casion," answered Bandy, grinning from ear to ear.

"I have sent the overseer and all the rest of the men to work on the levee," explained Fred; "it is feared that there will be a crevasse."

"I hope not, for if there is, we will not make any crop this year," replied the colonel.

The colonel and Fred then took their seats in the carriage, and were whirled off towards home.

At the time I write of, the country along the Mississippi River was very sparsely settled from Guion's Landing to Colonel Lenoir's plantation, which was five miles distant.

The carriage had proceeded about three miles and a half, and the colonel was just through telling Fred about his trip to Cincinnati, when someone, in a sharp peremptory voice, cried:

"Halt!"

Bandy reined up the horses abruptly, as a mounted man placed himself squarely across the road in front of them, while at the same moment two men on horseback made their appearance at the windows of the carriage.

"What do you want?" asked Colonel Lenoir, who, by the dim light, saw that the men had black masks over their faces.

"Your valuables!" replied one of the men, "and we will have to trouble you to get out of the carriage until we search you."

"What if I refuse?"

"Then I will try the effect of a little persuader," and he pointed a huge horse-pistol at the colonel's head.

Colonel Lenoir and Fred had each drawn a pistol, and

on hearing this answer, as if moved by one impulse, they fired at the robbers.

The right arm of the man Fred shot at was shattered by the bullet, and he dropped a pistol, which went off when it struck the ground.

But the horse of the other robber shied violently at the flash of Colonel Lenoir's pistol, and his rider was not hit; he promptly returned the fire, and the bullet from his pistol pierced the side of the colonel.

The carriage horses, alarmed at the firing, made a plunge forward, and the robber in front had to get out of the way or be run over.

Bandy then gave the man's horse a cut with the carriage whip, which set the animal to rearing and capering among the bushes.

The way now being clear, Bandy laid whip to his team, and they tore along at frantic speed through the dark woods, while the robbers, whooping and swearing, gave chase.

## CHAPTER IV.

### ROBBERS.

About the time that Doctor Cushion extinguished the fire the moon arose, but under the shadows of the trees it was dark as ever.

The doctor had not proceeded very far from where he examined the pocket-book when he came to an open space in the forest of an oval shape, some hundred yards long, carpeted with smooth turf.

When near the center of this little glade he felt one of those mysterious presentiments of danger which nearly everyone has experienced.

His hand instinctively sought his dagger, and after casting a quick glance in front and on each side, he looked behind him, and his eyes encountered the fiery green orbs of the panther.

The panther stopped when the doctor did, and was now about thirty yards distant, crouching with its head close to the ground.

He took a whistle from his pocket, and placing it to his lips blew it loudly.

On hearing the shrill sound, the panther uttered an angry growl, and raised his head as if listening.

Then apparently feeling secure of its prey, the creature made a short leap, crouched, arched its back, laid down and rolled over, as if it were playing.

But it was like a cat playing with a mouse, and each motion brought it nearer and nearer to the doctor.

The strain on Doctor Cushion's nerves was terrible, but he knew that it was no time for flinching, and stood firm.

The panther sprang upon the doctor, but the latter knifed him, and then fell unconscious.

Suddenly the bushes on one side of the glade were parted, and a man whose face unmistakably indicated the half-breed, made his appearance.

He was dressed in a suit of fringed buckskin, profusely ornamented with beads and porcupine quills; a huge horse-pistol was thrust through his belt, a machete hung by his side, a quiver of arrows hung over his shoulder, and in his hand he carried a short but powerful bow, such as are used by the Indians of the plains.

His keen eyes swept over the open space, and rested on the panther.

In an instant the half-breed fitted an arrow in his bow, and



sent it whistling through the air with so correct an aim that it was buried to the feather in the body of the panther.

"Ugh!" ejaculated the man, on seeing that the animal did not stir, and stepping from the bushes, he cautiously advanced towards it, machete in hand.

On reaching the panther he saw that it was dead, and discovered the doctor, who being under the animal, had not at first been noticed.

Pushing the dead panther to one side with his foot, the half-breed scrutinized the face of the prostrate man, and exclaimed:

"Me tink dat was de cap'n's whistle, an' now him dead, I spec so."

Thereupon he knelt, placed his hand over the heart of the insensible man, and found that it was beating faintly.

After hesitating a few moments, and glancing around to see that there was no one to observe him, the half-breed raised his machete to strike.

But at that moment the silence was broken by the sound of a horn, followed by the yelping and baying of dogs.

A look of fright replaced the scowl on the face of the half-breed, and for the time, at least, he abandoned his intention, and muttered to himself:

"Red Crow, you nearly make one fool of yourself den."

Sheathing his machete, he raised the doctor on his shoulders, seized the panther by one of its hind legs, and struck off through the woods at a rapid gait, carrying the wounded man and dragging the animal after him.

After proceeding about a quarter of a mile, and fording a wide but shallow stream, Red Crow, for such was the half-breed's name, stopped in front of a log cabin.

Red Crow knocked on the door in a peculiar manner, and after a short delay it was opened by a brawny ruffian, who, on seeing what the half-breed bore on his shoulder, uttered the single word:

"Tough."

"What's busted, Dick," asked some one inside of the cabin.

"Everything' busted," replied Dick Murphy, the man who opened the door. "Here's the cap'n dead as a door nail."

"Him no dead," said Red Crow, stalking into the cabin and laying his ghastly burden on a bunk.

"How did he get hurt?" asked Smith.

Red Crow's explanation was given in a very few words; he said that he was examining some traps which he had set, to see if there were anything caught in them, when he heard a whistle, and on going to where the sound proceeded from, found the injured man, and dead panther.

While on board of the steamboat Sultana, the wounded man represented himself to be Doctor Cushion, and he has since been designated by the title; but as the reader has no doubt already surmised, he was really Garcia Alva, captain of the outlaws, and Red Crow, Smith and Murphy were members of his band.

When he finished his story Red Crow went outside of the cabin, and skinned the panther, then returned and stretched himself on the floor in front of the fire.

In the meantime, Murphy and Smith bound up the wounds of the injured man, and forced a little whiskey between his teeth, but he continued insensible.

Smith and Murphy made no further attempt to revive him, but seating themselves at a rude table, upon which was a bottle of whiskey and a greasy pack of cards, conversed in tones very little louder than a whisper.

Red Crow apparently got all the information he desired, by listening to their conversation, a few minutes, for he asked no questions, and in a short time seemed to be sound asleep.

"Well?" said Smith, who spoke first, glancing towards the bunk where the wounded man was lying.

"He is everlastingly cut into shoe-strings," remarked Murphy.

"I think he will kick the bucket before morning."

"How about the gang?"

"Oh, we will stick together, of course."

"There will have to be a captain."

"Certainly," said Smith, as if he had never thought of that. "We can settle about that when the time comes."

"Settle now," Murphy answered.

Smith was not disposed to discuss the subject, but Murphy would not be put off.

The two men were, next to Garcia Alva, the leading spirits among the robbers, and now that they believed him to be dying, both of them aspired to the office of captain.

Murphy was overbearing and brutal, Smith cunning and vindictive.

It was not the first time that their interests had clashed, and they hated each other cordially.

Finally Smith, who was usually the coolest of the two, became so much enraged that he said:

"You are a stupid fool, and everybody knows it."

"You are a coward," retorted Murphy, "take that!" and reaching across the table he slapped Smith's face.

That was an insult which both the men knew could only be wiped out with blood, and they instantly sprang to their feet, and drew their knives.

Red Crow's ears and eyes were both wide open now, but he did not stir, for he was well aware that his life would probably pay the forfeit if he interfered.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE CHASE—FRED IN DANGER.

The yells of the robbers pursuing Colonel Lenoir and Fred were answered by a whoop from the woods to the right of the road, and twelve other mounted men, who had been concealed there, made their appearance, and joined in the chase.

As the frightened horses dashed along with Colonel Lenoir's carriage, it swayed and lurched from side to side fearfully.

The pursuers had to remain directly behind the carriage.

And Fred, by kneeling on the rear seat of the vehicle, and firing an occasional shot out of the back window, soon made them conclude that it was advisable to keep at a respectable distance, until they should come to an open space, where their full strength could be brought to bear.

Weak as he was, Colonel Lenoir stifled his groans, and when he spoke, which was but seldom, urged Fred to fight to the bitter end.

There was not a single house between Colonel Lenoir's plantation and the landing on the river, and his nearest neighbor lived at least four miles away.

Ordinarily, however, Fred would have felt that he and his father would be safe if they reached home, for the presence of the overseer and negro men would in all probability have deterred the robbers from attacking the house.

Owing to the location of the house, and Colonel Lenoir's helpless condition, it was very doubtful whether he could be got into it before the robbers killed, or seized him.

After revolving all of these circumstances in his mind, Fred was almost irresistibly forced to the conclusion that there was scarcely a shadow of hope that he could successfully defend his father and himself.

In the meantime the carriage had been thundering along, bumping and banging against the trees and stumps, escaping



from being overturned or broken down, and was now only a short distance from Colonel Lenoir's residence.

Putting his head out of one of the carriage windows, Fred cried:

"Bandy!"

"Sir?" answered Bandy.

"When we get to the gate I will jump out and open it, and do you drive for your life, straight to the house, and carry father into it."

"I'll do my bes', Mars Fred."

By this time the carriage was within a hundred yards of the fence around Colonel Lenoir's yard, and in a few seconds, Bandy reined the horses back on their haunches at the gate.

Before the carriage had fairly stopped, Fred sprang out, unlatched the gate and threw it open.

As the gate flew open, Bandy's whip descended on the backs of the spirited horses, and plunging forward with a bound which nearly took them out of the harness, they darted towards the house like a thunderbolt, leaving Fred—who stopped an instant to shut the gate—so far behind, that it was idle for him to think of overtaking it.

The carriage was not detained at the gate more than a moment or two, but short as the time was, the robbers—burying the spurs in their horses's sides—dashed at it like hawks swooping on their prey.

But they were a little too late, for Fred slammed the gate in their very faces.

Fred, however, did not have the fraction of a second to spare, for, as the heavy gate, shoved with all his strength, closed, it struck against the head of the foremost robber's horse, and it fell as if it had been shot.

The robbers were moving at a furious pace, when their progress was suddenly barred by the gate and the fall of their leading man, whose horse was knocked down, consequently those in the rear crowded on those in front, until they were all huddled together.

Without a moment's hesitation, Fred drew a revolver, and opened fire on the almost solid mass of men.

Two men were slain outright, and another so desperately wounded that he could scarcely keep from falling by clinging to his horse's neck.

Firing a scattered volley, which sent a shower of splinters from the gate over Fred, and cut his clothes in two places, the ruffians, as with one impulse, recoiled.

But they were men accustomed to danger; they did not move back but a short distance, and soon as they had reloaded their pistols, and exchanged a few words with each other, made a determined charge on the gate.

The reports of the pistols, and the yells and oaths of the robbers, made a noise that was absolutely appalling.

The crack of Fred's revolvers was so incessant, that it seemed as if he had multiplied himself to half a dozen.

The fight was furious, but brief. The grim endurance with which Fred clung to his post, told.

The fierce charge expended itself; three of the robbers bit the dust, and they staggered back, leaving Fred begrimed with powder, and with his clothes riddled by bullets, but unhurt, and victorious.

After the rough handling which they received, the robbers were not disposed to charge again. The revolver was evidently something new to them, and the deadly effects of its fire terrified them.

Fred reloaded his pistols, and awaited further developments.

After consulting together for awhile, the robbers galloped off to one side about a hundred and fifty yards, and commenced to tear down the fence, intending to thus get into the yard without the necessity of forcing their way through the gate.

This flank movement rendered Fred's position untenable, for if he remained where he was, he would soon be surrounded. He therefore darted off towards the house at the top of his speed.

He ran like a deer, but before he had gone a hundred yards, the robbers were in the yard and in hot pursuit of him.

Darting through the door, which was thrown open by Bandy, who saw him approaching, Fred was, for the time being, at least safe.

"Where's my double-barrelled gun?" he asked, without waiting to regain his breath.

"Here it is settin' in de corner," replied Bandy who was engaged in locking and barring the door.

"Where is father, and how is he?" inquired Fred.

"Mars Robert's in his room, an' he better, an' been askin' 'bout you."

Fred found his father in bed, attended by the colored housekeeper, who had bound up his wound and given him a little brandy, which revived him considerably.

The colonel's eye brightened when he saw Fred, and after they had silently pressed each other's hands, asked:

"Are you hurt, my boy?"

"No, sir," Fred replied, "and how do you feel?"

"Well as could be expected, but I can't last long; where are the scoundrels?"

"Hid around the house somewhere, but I've settled four or five of them."

"Good. Now unbuckle this belt from around my waist, and secure it about your person."

As Fred took the money belt—which up to this time the colonel had refused to part with—he secured it around his body under his clothes as directed.

"The memorandum of directions how to find the papers we need to gain our suit, are in that," said the colonel; "cling to it until you get the papers, not only as if your life depended on it, but as if your immortal soul was at stake."

Before Fred could reply, a peculiar rustling noise was heard.

"It sounds just like puttin' fodder in de stable," said the colored housekeeper.

"That is it!" exclaimed Colonel Lenoir; "the villains are making preparations to burn the house down."

"What had we best do?" asked Fred.

"You and Bandy must take the double-barrelled guns and pistols, and go out of a door on the other side of the house, and try to steal or fight your way to the woods."

"I can't leave you, father."

"If you do not, and then use every effort to get the papers and carry them to our lawyer, my dying curse shall rest on you!" the colonel said, emphatically.

Fred was too much overcome by contending emotions to speak, and at that moment, thin puffs of smoke shot up through the cracks in the floor, indicating that the combustibles under the house had been set on fire.

## CHAPTER VI.

### FRED FORCED TO ABANDON HIS FATHER.

As Fred turned to leave the room one of the robbers shouted:

"Halloo! in the house there."

"Answer him, Fred," said the colonel, "and let us hear what he has to say."

Stepping to one of the windows, but keeping himself sheltered by the wall to one side of it, Fred sung out:

"Halloo!"

"Are you going to give up?" asked the robber.

"Give up what?"

"Give up your valuables."

"What if we refuse?" asked Fred of the robber.



"Then we will burn the house up and everyone in it," was the reply.

"We would like to have a little time to consider the matter."

"Be quick about it, then."

The old housekeeper had been let out the back door, and was in the custody of the robbers.

After Fred and Bandy examined their arms, and provided themselves with a large quantity of ammunition, Fred went into his father's room.

"Father, I am ready to go," he said.

"Then the sooner you get off the better," replied the colonel.

"If I escape I shall go straight to the river, where the neighbors and their hands are working on the levee, and return with assistance."

"Do as you please, then, but it would be better for you to go to Guion's Landing, and take the first boat to New Orleans."

"Good-by, father!"

"Good-by, Fred. Bless you, my son!"

Neither of them doubted that their parting would be final, and their feelings may be imagined but not described.

They wrung each other's hands, and gazed into each other's faces, as they who look upon those whom they love for the last time, and then Fred tore himself away and left the room to start on his perilous adventure.

Colonel Lenoir remained motionless until he heard a shot and shout, which he regarded as evidence that Fred and Bandy had left the house, and were discovered by the robbers.

Then a look of stern determination stole over his face.

"Heaven grant that Fred may escape!" he murmured, "but in any event I'll cheat the villains out of part of their prey," and he deliberately tore the bandages off of his wounds.

The blood gushed forth, and the colonel grew fainter and fainter, until finally a convulsive tremor passed through his frame, and he lay like an unsouled clod, deaf to the voice of affection, and regardless of the malice of his enemies.

Houses in the South are built so as to secure the largest amount of ventilation possible, and there were doors, as well as windows, on every side of Colonel Lenoir's residence.

Fred, therefore, had the option of starting from the house in any direction he chose.

He determined to leave it by a door on the side towards the river.

Fred and Bandy succeeded in reaching the shrubbery back of the house safely. But they had been seen by the robbers.

They were fired upon, but were not hit.

While the robbers—keeping themselves concealed—consulted about a plan of attack, a horse urged to the top of his speed was heard approaching.

Dashing in at the front gate, the rider gave a shrill whistle.

One of the robbers answered the signal, and went to meet the newcomer.

Fred was apprehensive that the arrival of the man indicated the approach of reinforcements for the robbers.

But he was soon to learn that he was threatened by another and very different kind of peril.

After exchanging a few words with the mounted man, the robber, who went to meet him, yelled out at the top of his voice:

"Get! Get up and get!"

The words evidently had a peculiar significance to the robbers.

For uttering oaths and confused cries of rage and dismay, the whole band simultaneously rushed to their horses, mounted in haste, dashed out of the yard, and clattered off down the road.

Bandy uttered a grunt of astonishment, and exclaimed:

"Dar now! Dat beats my time ob day; what for you tink de matter, Marser Fred?"

Fred, whose first thought was about his father, had already started towards the house; he was about to reply to Bandy's remark, when he heard something which made him pause in open-mouthed astonishment.

It was a sound like that of a distant cataract, mingled with occasional cracks as of breaking timber.

"What in the world is that?" he asked.

"I tink it must be a hurryumcane," suggested Brady.

"Hurricane, the mischief! the sky is clear as a bell, and there is not a breath of air stirring."

The murmuring sound which was low at first, steadily grew louder, and the crackling noise became more frequent.

"Maybe de leebby done broke," suggested Bandy.

"That is what it is," assented Fred, "the levee has broken, and the sound we hear is made by the water rushing through the crevasse."

"What for you goin' to do, Mrs' Fred?"

"Let us hurry to the house and see about father first, then we will determine."

Fred and Bandy hastened to the house.

There were no signs of a fire.

Proceeding to the door out of which he had issued from the house, Fred unlocked it and admitted himself and Bandy to the building.

They at once hurried to Colonel Lenoir's room, and were horrified to find the bed stained with blood.

Fred spoke to his father, but he did not answer; he felt his heart, but could detect no pulsation.

"Is ole massa dead?" asked Bandy, in a subdued voice.

"Yes," replied Fred, with a burst of grief, "and I fear by his own hand, for the bandages are off of his wounds."

For the first time, Fred lingered by the bedside and gave vent to his feelings, and when he turned away his heart was filled with a burning thirst for vengeance.

In the meantime the yellow, turbid waters of the Mississippi were sweeping over the land, uprooting trees, carrying away houses, and drowning human beings, and cattle.

"Bandy," asked Fred, "what will become of the negroes at the quarters, during the overflow?"

"Dey'll get on de platform where de cotton is dried," replied Bandy, "an dere dey'll be safe."

"Then we will take the canoe at the bayou, and go down to Lake Pontchartrain, and paddle along the shore to New Orleans."

"Who goin' to 'tend to berryin' ole massa?"

"I'll send the undertaker up from the city, we will get there to-morrow—this house is on high ground and will stand."

Issuing from the house, and locking the door, Fred and Bandy hastened up to the quarters, and left the key, and word for the overseer to take care of the colonel's body.

The water from the crevasse had now reached Colonel Lenoir's place, though it was yet quite shallow, but it gained in volume and depth every moment, and by the time Fred and Bandy arrived at the bayou, which was about a quarter of a mile distance, it was up to their knees.

They found the canoe straining and tugging at the rope with which it was tied.

Casting on the rope, Fred and Bandy sprang into the canoe, and seizing the broad-bladed paddles, sent the light craft flying down the narrow stream.

There was no necessity to paddle, for the current hurried them along at terrific speed, and Fred and Bandy had all they could do to keep their little boat from being overturned, and to avoid being dragged out of it by limbs and vines, through and under which they were constantly carried.



To make matters worse, the sky became cloudy, and the moon gave so little light that it was impossible to see but a few yards in any direction.

Finally, after several hours of this perilous progress, during which every nerve was kept in a painful state of tension, their canoe crashed through some thick vines, and struck something in front with such force that Fred and Bandy were thrown prostrate.

They had accidentally run against one of those knolls of elevated land which are sometimes found in the swamp; its extent Fred could not even guess at, for some of them are many acres, while others contain only a few square yards.

Determining to make themselves as comfortable as the circumstances of the case would admit of, Fred and Bandy commenced to collect some dry sticks, intending to make a fire.

While they were thus engaged, a shriek of deadly agony pierced the air, above the roar of the flood, above the moaning of the wind among the trees.

"Come," said Fred, after a little pause, "there is some woman in danger, and we must go to her assistance."

Bandy thought there was something supernatural about the affair, and his eyes stuck out of his head with apprehension; but he made no objection to Fred's proposition, and followed his footsteps, when he moved off towards the spot from whence the shrieks proceeded.

After going a short distance, they struck into a narrow path.

After following this path—which wound in a tortuous course among the trees—for, perhaps, a hundred yards, Fred and Bandy saw a large dark mass looming up between them and the sky.

"It must be a house," whispered Fred.

But on approaching the object, they found that it was one of those mysterious Indian mounds, numbers of which have been discovered along the valley of the Mississippi.

The sound evidently proceeded from the inside of the mound, and the words uttered were in some strange, barbaric tongue, which Fred did not understand.

But their effect on Bandy was fearful to behold; his yellow face grew actually livid with fright, and he sunk to the ground writhing in terror.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Fred, in a low voice.

"Voudou," m<sup>e</sup>an<sup>e</sup>d Bandy, commencing to crawl off down the path on his hands and knees.

Finding that Bandy was completely under the influence of superstitious fears, Fred determined to examine the mound alone.

Moving cautiously around it, and gliding his hand over the grassgrown surface, he at length discovered a slender ray of light which proceeded from a crevice.

On looking through the opening he saw a sight which made him doubt his waking senses.

A circular apartment, with dome-shaped ceiling, had been hollowed out in the mound, and in its center was standing a beautiful girl, apparently not more than sixteen years of age, clad in only one light undergarment.

She seemed to be petrified with terror, and well she might be, for around her danced a dozen or more of the most hideous negroes imaginable.

The horrid crew was made up of about equal numbers of males and females.

## CHAPTER VII.

### COMBAT WITH KNIVES.

It will be remembered that when Garcia Alva was carried in apparently a dying condition to the cabin in the swamp, that Dick Murphy and Gus Smith quarreled about which of

them should succeed him as commander of the gang of robbers, and drew their knives to settle the matter.

Both were pretty well matched, and they fought for some time without either one getting the advantage of the other.

Smith and Murphy were both pretty well blown by their violent exertions, and badly shaken by the falls they had received.

Therefore both naturally paused for a moment to get their breath.

While they stood glaring at each other, a sound, which seemed to be produced by some hard object drawn across the door, was heard.

"Who's that?" asked Murphy.

"One," was the response of some person outside of the door.

"What!"

"The band."

"It is Shanks," said Murphy to Smith. "Suppose we stop our little affair until we find out what brings him here at this time of night."

"All right," replied Smith.

Murphy opened the door, and Shanks, a tall, ungainly robber, who had been to a country store and post office some five miles distant, entered.

His labored breathing and the perspiration which poured off his face in streams, indicated that he had been traveling at a rapid pace.

"We have got to leave here in a hurry," were the first words he uttered.

"Why?" asked Murphy.

"Yesterday a jug of whiskey was taken from a squatter's cabin, and his wife insulted by Red Crow; the man and his friends are out with nigger dogs looking for Crow, and will trail him here sure as a gun, and they won't make any bones of swinging all of the gang that they catch."

"The mischief you say. Our orders were not to disturb anyone within ten miles of the cabin, and if the captain was all right, Red Crow would have to stretch a rope for raising this rumpus."

"What's the matter with the captain? Have you heard from him since I left this morning?"

"He is in the bunk there, and has everlastingly been chewed up by a panther."

"Can he be moved? for we will have to go at once."

"Oh, we needn't bother about him, he will be dead before morning, anyway."

"Not much," in a calm, quiet voice, said Garcia Alva, who had regained his consciousness, and overheard the forgoing conversation.

Startled by this unexpected interruption, Shanks, Smith, and Murphy moved toward the bunk, and as they did so, the two latter exchanged a glance which meant: "If he heard us quarreling——"

"So you are not dead yet, captain," said Smith.

"No," replied Garcia Alva, "nor likely to be soon. Where is Crow?"

"Lying by the fire."

"Red Crow, you scoundrel, come here."

"Red Crow arose reluctantly, and with a look of sullen confusion on his face approached the bunk.

"You have disobeyed my orders, Crow," said Garcia Alva, sternly, "and now we will have to fly for our lives, and this hiding-place will be broken up; have you anything to say why I should not have you hanged?"

"Whiskey make Red Crow one black fool," replied the half-breed.

"We all know that you are a fool, whiskey or no whiskey, but that has nothing to do with the matter."



"Red Crow dry heap, he beg for little drink, white squaw say Ingun no, Red Crow take jug, white squaw throw hot water on Red Crow.

"That is no excuse; have you anything else to say?"

"Red Crow save cap'n's life."

"How?"

The half-breed gave an account of how he found Garcia Alva, and carried him to the cabin; when he had concluded, Alva said:

"Well, I will give you your life for mine—Shanks, how long will it be before those squatters will be here?"

"Very likely they will be here in less than an hour," replied Shanks.

"Then we must be off—get the boat in the water, put the swag, some whiskey and provisions in it, and then you can help me aboard; I don't feel as if I could walk."

In obedience to this order a skiff was drawn from its place of concealment in a thicket, and put into the stream which Red Crow forded in coming to the cabin.

Whiskey, provisions, bags containing the robber's clothes, and an iron-bound box, in which were some valuables not yet divided among the gang, were placed on board, and then Garcia Alva, wrapped in a blanket, was carried and held in the stern-sheets.

By this time the baying of dogs, and the shouts of men encouraging them, could be distinctly heard.

"Red Crow," said Garcia Alva, after listening a moment or two, "this stream is so crooked that those chaps can cut us off before we can reach the river if they suspect which way we have gone; you must go on foot, and throw them off the trail."

The face of the half-breed darkened, but he drew himself up, and said:

"Red Crow will throw dust in the eyes of the pale-faces, and leave them behind as the deer outstrips the bear."

"All right; if you save your scalp you know where to find us."

The next moment the skiff, urged by the vigorous strokes of Murphy and Shanks, shot off down stream.

Red Crow tightened his belt, listened for a few seconds to the cries of men and dogs, which thickened as the chase drew nigh, and then bounded off through the forest with a speed which seemed to defy pursuit.

Garcia Alva's plan to mislead his pursuers was cleverly designed, but signally failed—as will be seen in the sequel—because the men after him were like wolves in pursuit, had eyes that saw in the dark, and were not easily baffled.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE RESCUED MAIDEN.

As Fred looked into the mound and saw the negroes dancing around the girl he knew they were contemplating the sacrifice of the girl's life in some manner. So he drew his revolver, fired it into the air, and while the negroes were seized with fear, he rushed in and took the maiden in his arms.

Then he rushed out of the mound, carrying the girl on his shoulder.

As Fred sped along the narrow pathway with the girl, he expected every moment to encounter some of the hideous negroes whom he saw in the mound.

But with the girl resting on his shoulder, and supported by his left arm, and a pistol in his right hand, he pressed forward—ready to fight if necessary—and reached the canoe without meeting a single human being.

Pushing the canoe into the water, he placed the girl—who was now insensible—in it, sprang in himself, and paddled about a hundred yards away from the island.

Then to prevent the canoe from being carried off by the

current, he tied it to a small tree, and turned his attention to the girl.

She lay motionless on the bottom of the boat where he had placed her.

He, however, found that her heart was beating, and after he had sprinkled some water in her face, and chafed her hands and forehead, she began slowly to regain consciousness.

When the girl recovered her senses, and saw Fred's white face bending over her wearing a look of solicitude, she felt that she was with a friend, and her overstrained feelings found vent in a copious flood of tears.

Fred assured her of safety, and gradually she grew calmer. He then asked:

"Where do you live, and how did you happen to be in the power of the negroes?"

"I live on the shore of Lake Pontchartrain, near New Orleans," she replied, "and my name is Anita —"

She spoke in such a low, trembling voice that Fred did not understand what she said her surname was, but as he did not think it a matter of any importance, he made no comment, and she proceeded with her narrative.

"About a week ago, late in the afternoon, I was returning home alone from a neighbor's house, when two negro men sprang out of the bushes by the road-side, threw a cloth over my head, so as to stifle my cries, and bore me off into the woods.

"After I was carried some considerable distance, my captors placed me on my feet, but did not remove the cloth from around my head.

"Seizing me by the arms they hurried me along at a rapid pace, until I was nearly dead with fatigue.

"For hours, it seemed to me, this mad race was continued, during which time I was not allowed to rest for a moment, or even to beg for mercy.

"At length when they halted and let go of my arms, I fell on the ground like one bereft of life.

"I lay so still that the negroes, probably thinking I might die, removed the cloth from my head and forced me to swallow some liquor which burned my lips and throat, and nearly strangled me.

"The cloth was then replaced around the lower part of my face so as to cover my mouth, but not my nose or eyes.

"Being able to look about me, I found that I was in a dense thicket on the shore of the lake.

"One of the negroes kept guard over me, while the other went off, and in a short time returned with a canoe.

"After being threatened with instant death if I made any outcry, and did not keep still, I was laid in the bottom of the boat and covered up with some fishing-net.

"The negroes then seated themselves in the canoe, and I knew from the sound of the paddles that it was being urged rapidly through the water.

"I suffered intense pain from the bruises and scratches which I received while being dragged through the woods, but was so completely overcome by fatigue, that I fell into a deep, death-like slumber.

"It was near daybreak when I was awakened by one of the negroes shaking me roughly by the shoulder.

"The canoe had been run ashore among some tall reeds, and I was ordered to get out.

"I was so weak and sore that I could scarcely move, but I was made to walk about a mile to a hut in the woods.

The hut, which was so low that it was scarcely possible to stand erect in it, reeked with filth, and was occupied by two negro women, who were, if possible, more repulsive than the men who captured me.

"After a short stay at the hut, the negro men tied me securely, and departed, leaving me with the two women.



"In this miserable place I was kept, bound hand and foot, five days, during which time I was sparingly supplied with food, robbed of the greater part of my clothing, and abused almost incessantly.

"Last evening a party of negro men and women came to the hut, blindfolded me, and led me some miles through the forest.

"When the bandage was removed from my eyes, I was in an underground apartment, and learned that I was in the hands of Voudou negroes, who worship serpents, and that I was to be sacrificed to their god.

"I shrieked with terror; and afterwards I could neither speak nor move, and everything seemed like a horrible dream.

"I have not the remotest idea of how I was rescued from the negroes, or where I am now."

Fred gave an account of what happened after he arrived at the mound, and Anita seizing his hand, kissed it, and said:

"As long as I live, I will bless you for saving me from a horrible death."

Fred was about to disclaim having done anything but his duty, when there arose from the island shouts mingled with crashing sounds, as of men or large animals forcing their way through the bushes rapidly, and shrill and clear above the uproar, was heard the voice of Bandy, crying:

"Help—help! Save me, Mars' Fred, save me!"

#### CHAPTER IX.

##### WHAT HAPPENED TO BANDY.

When Bandy, overcome by superstitious terrors, left Fred at the Indian mound and retreated, his only idea was to get away from the dangerous locality.

After crawling on his hands and knees a short distance, he arose to his feet, and dashed straight forward, instead of following the winding path.

Before proceeding very far he ran into a matted mass of thorny vines and briars, which not only scratched him terribly, but effectually stopped his further progress.

While extricating himself from the thorns, Bandy had time to collect his scattered wits sufficiently to conclude that his best course would be to return to the place where he and Fred left the canoe.

This was no doubt a wise resolution, but unfortunately he did not know which way to turn; for owing to his fright he had paid no attention to the direction in which he ran.

However, he started off at a venture, and was moving along cautiously when the report of Fred's pistol, and the yells of the negroes, as they fled from the mound, threw him into a perfect paroxysm of terror.

Believing that he had to deal with persons possessing supernatural powers, he gave himself up for lost, and sank on the ground a prey to the most intolerable apprehensions.

While Bandy was thus groveling on the ground, and trembling like a leaf, Fred rescued Anita, and conveyed her to the canoe, as related in the preceding chapter.

And during the same time the negroes who fled from the mound recovered from their panic.

Finding that they were not pursued, they soon began to creep back towards the mound to discover who it was that had interrupted their orgies, and, if possible, to revenge themselves.

While thus moving forward noiseless as night-birds seeking their prey, one of them stumbled upon Bandy, grabbed him and jerked him to his feet, exclaiming:

"Wha' you doin' here, nigger?"

"Ise not doin' nuffin'," gasped Bandy, trembling as if he had the palsy.

"Come here, ebbrybody. Ise cotched one ob dem!"

Bandy heard the other negroes approaching, and, with the

determination born of despair, drew his knife and thrust it in the stomach of the man who held him.

Uttering a yell of pain, the negro fell to the ground, and Bandy darted away with feet winged with fear.

"Cotch dat nigger! Stop him!" cried the wounded man, "he done kill me!"

Shouting like demons incarnate, the other negroes dashed after Bandy, who then, as before mentioned, cried out:

"Help—help! Save me, Mars Fred!"

Fred had not forgotten Bandy, and even while listening to Anita's story, was racking his brain for some plan to find the mulatto, and get him off of the island.

But he could not think of any way to accomplish this without exposing Anita to the risk of recapture.

The shouts of the negroes, and Bandy's cry for help, however, warned him of the necessity of acting promptly, and he said:

"Bandy has faced death for me like a hero, and I will not desert him now."

"But what can you do?"

"That depends on circumstances. Can you paddle a canoe?"

"Yes, I have frequently done so, when out fishing with my brothers."

"Then I will land, and you can paddle back to this tree, tie the canoe to it, and wait while I see what can be done for Bandy."

"Don't go; you will just lose your life without doing any good."

"I hope not; but in any event it is my duty to go, for I fear Bandy cannot long elude his pursuers," whereupon Fred untied the rope which held the canoe, and paddled towards the island.

"What must I do if you should not return?" asked Anita.

"Paddle in the direction the current is running and you will reach Lake Pontchartrain, and then you will be safe, for vessels are constantly passing to and fro."

As he finished speaking, the bow of the boat touched the shore, and as Fred stepped out, he inquired:

"Can you shoot?"

"A little," replied Anita. "I have fired at a mark occasionally."

"Then I will leave my gun with you, so that you can defend yourself if necessary."

Fred, sheltering himself from observation among some thick bushes, paused to determine how he should proceed in his dangerous undertaking.

He felt pretty certain that if he was with Bandy, and the latter would behave as well as he did in the combat with the robbers, that they might fight their way to the canoe, and once on board of that, they would be safe.

But how could he join Bandy? that was the difficulty.

The whole island was in an uproar.

The whoops and yells of the negroes and the noise they made in pursuing Bandy, had both alarmed and infuriated the wild animals, and a number of cattle which had taken refuge on the island.

Consequently Fred thought that it would be useless for him to shout to Bandy.

And if Bandy called out after uttering the cry for help which Fred heard while in the canoe, his voice was drowned by the tumultuous sounds which filled the air.

Occasionally, however, the yells of the negroes could be heard, now in one direction, now in another, indicating that Bandy was leading them a lively chase.

Determining to trust to the voices of the negroes for guidance, Fred started off at a rapid pace towards where he last heard them, muttering to himself:



"I must find Bandy before he is overtaken, or he is lost, for his pursuers are human tigers and will show no mercy."

## CHAPTER X.

## THE SQUATTERS.

Some fifteen or twenty minutes after Garcia Alva and the other robbers left the cabin in the swamp, half a dozen medium-sized, compactly-built hounds made their appearance on the scene.

The hounds were on Red Crow's trail; they followed it without hesitation to the cabin, but on coming to where the other robbers had passed to and fro, seemed to be uncertain how to proceed.

They ran back and forth, between the cabin and the bank of the stream, where the boat was launched, and then began to whine and bark.

Several encouraging shouts were heard, and two or three minutes afterward eight sunburnt men, armed with long, heavy rifles, and mounted on small, active horses, galloped up to the cabin.

The men were all squatters, than whom better woodsmen or shrewder people in all that appertained to their wild life never lived anywhere.

The party reined up their horses in front of the cabin, and their leader, a tall, grizzly-bearded man, named Armstrong, cried out:

"Halloo!"

Receiving no answer, he rode close to the door, which was closed and locked, and knocking on it with the handle of his hunting-knife, shouted:

"Hey! halloo! hey!"

There was no response from the cabin, and Armstrong said:

"Maybe they're playin' 'possum," remarked one of the men.

"We'll soon find out," remarked Armstrong, dismounting, and tying his horse to a swinging limb.

The other squatters followed his example, and soon they were all on foot.

A portion of the squatters stationed themselves so that they could command every side of the cabin with their rifles, and two of the stoutest men in the party picked up a heavy log of wood, and using it as a battering-ram, attacked the door.

A few heavy blows sent the door flying from its hinges, and the light of the fire which was still burning in the fire-place, showed that there was no one in the cabin.

"The birds have flown," said Armstrong, leading the way into the house.

After inspecting the interior of the cabin, some of the squatters made pine-torches, and by their light carefully examined the ground around the house.

By signs which unpractised eyes would not have noticed, the squatters were soon as well aware of how the robbers left the place as if they had witnessed their departure.

"We will bag them yet," said Armstrong; "let two men take the dogs, and follow the chap who went on foot, and the rest of us will strike a bee-line for the river at the north of this stream, and hive the rascals in the boat."

This suggestion was acted upon immediately.

The dogs were placed on Red Crow's trail, and went off in full cry closely followed by two of the squatters, while Armstrong and the rest of the party galloped off in the direction which they knew would carry them straight to the mouth of the stream.

In the meantime Garcia Alva and his companions were gliding along down the crooked stream in the skiff towards the same point, little dreaming of the preparations being made to give them a warm reception.

Murphy and Shanks rowed and Smith steered.

As soon as the boat was fairly under way, Garcia Alva, who was in the stern-sheets close to Smith, asked him:

"Did you get my letter?"

"Yes, I sent half of the gang to patrol the road between Guion's Landing and Lenoir's plantation, and the rest to watch his house near New Orleans."

"You should have sent them down the river on a steamboat."

"You wrote me to send them on horseback."

"I know I did, but I expected that you would get my letter sooner; however, the matter can not be helped now; if Colonel Lenoir stopped at Guion's Landing, it will be all right anyway; if he went straight on to New Orleans the men will hardly be there in time."

"How did you succeed up the country?"

"I was not in time to prevent Lenoir from seeing the quadroon woman, Maria, and getting the information he wanted, and when I found her—which I did with considerable difficulty, for she has married a negro barber and changed her name—she refused to tell me anything about the papers, and I was so infernally mad that I knocked her down with my fist, whereupon her husband, with a lot of other free negroes, pitched into me, and I had a hard time to get away. Determining not to lose sight of Lenoir, I came down the river on the same boat with him, and——"

Garcia then gave an account of what happened on the *Sultana* (which has already been related in the first chapters of this narrative).

After proceeding for about an hour and a half they came to where a tree had fallen across the stream and against which a large quantity of driftwood had lodged, covering the surface of the water from bank to bank for some distance.

"Smith," said Garcia, "get out and see how the land lies; the skiff will have to be carried around this raft."

Smith was in the act of stepping ashore when the peculiar whistle used by the robbers as a signal was heard proceeding from a cane-brake near at hand.

"Halloo! that must be one of our men," said Garcia Alva, then raising his voice, he cried out: "Who is that?"

"One," was the answer.

"All serene. Come."

The next moment a man emerged from the cane-brake and unhesitatingly advanced towards the boat.

On catching sight of the new-comer's face, Murphy leveled a pistol at him, and exclaimed:

"Trapped—he is not one of the gang!"

## CHAPTER XI.

## CAUGHT IN THE CREVASSE.

"Hold!" cried Garcia Alva, just as Murphy was about to fire on the man who was approaching the skiff. "Isn't that Brian?"

"It is what there is left of him," replied Bill Brian, for it was he, and he advanced to the boat, shook hands with Garcia Alva, and was introduced to Murphy and Smith.

As soon as their greetings were over, he asked of Garcia:

"Did I kill that rascal Lenoir?"

"No," replied Garcia, "but you put a bullet through his shoulder."

"The pistol was overloaded, and shot too high, or I would have put the ball through his heart; but I'll get him the next time."

"He has probably been captured by some of our band by this time; if so, you must not interfere with him until I say the word."

"All right, I'll not trouble him until you are through with him, but kill him I will, sooner or later, if I swing for it."

Garcia Alva had sworn that Colonel Lenoir should die by



his hand, and as he was very conscientious about matters of that kind, he intended, if possible, to keep his oath; but he was too prudent a rascal to run the risk of getting into a squabble with Brian by saying anything about his intentions, so he remarked:

"I was afraid you were a gone coon when you jumped into the river."

"Oh, that is an old trick of mine," replied Brian, with a slight laugh.

"What did you do?"

"I swam ashore all right, and was lucky enough to find a new settler's house close by, dried my clothes, hailed another boat, and in less than two hours after jumping off of the Sultana I was on my way down the river on board of the Mezepa."

"You were quick."

"You had better believe it. Well, I intended to get off at Quarle's wood-yard—as you told me to do; but the captain of the Mazeppa made a mistake; he passed the place, and then put me off at a trading-boat four miles below."

"That was bad."

"So I thought; but there was no help for it, so after taking a drink on the trading-boat, I started off to foot it to the wood-yard."

"Why did you not come straight to our cabin?"

"I had walked about two miles, when I came to a lot of horses, all saddled and bridled, hitched under the trees; there were eight of them."

"Was there no one with them?"

"Not a soul."

"There were some squatters after us to-night, but I sent a half-breed to throw them off of our track; and the bait took, I know, for we heard their dogs running off in an opposite direction from the one you speak of; the men, no doubt, followed the hounds, so the horses can not be the ones they were riding."

"Then there are two gangs of squatters out to-night, or the party has divided, part of them going one way, and part another."

"The mischief!" exclaimed Garcia, exchanging glances of consternation with Smith and Murphy.

"Better leave the skiff, and make tracks at once," suggested Gus Smith.

"I'd rather go to the river, and take the chances of paddling across on a log," said Murphy, who, being a bulky, heavy man, did not fancy the idea of traveling on foot.

"How about those horses? Do you think they could be brought off without the squatters knowing it?" asked Garcia.

"I have no doubt of it."

"Then do you take Smith and Murphy with you, and get them as soon as possible."

"Must we bring all of them?"

"Yes."

Thereupon the three men departed, leaving Garcia sitting in the boat, and in about half an hour they returned with the eight horses.

"How many men are there on the trading boat?" asked Garcia.

"I only saw one man and a young fellow not quite grown," replied Brian.

"Good! Now help me to mount, and lead the way to the boat. I think the owner will give it to us; if so, we can take the horses on board, float off down the river, and leave those squatters in the lurch."

After a ride of about an hour, during which a plan of action was agreed upon, the bank of the river was reached at the place where the trading boat was.

"Halloo!" hailed Brian.

"Halloo it is!" replied a voice from the interior of the boat; "who's that?"

"I am the man who landed here to-night."

"What do you want?"

"I've brought some of my friends to try your whiskey."

The door was slid back, a gang-plank shoved out to the shore, and Garcia and his companions, after hitching the horses, went on board.

"Walk in, gentlemen," said the owner of the boat, a good-humored looking man with a red nose. "It is rather late, but what's the odds?"

"You seemed to be having a good time," remarked Garcia, "and I fear we have interrupted you."

"Oh, I was only scraping on the fiddle a little, and Jim was doing the double-shuffle; put some whiskey and cups on the table, Jim. Gentlemen, as this is your first visit, you must take a drink with me."

The young man called Jim now placed the whiskey and some small tin cups on the table.

"Here's a long life, and a merry one," said Garcia, touching cups, before drinking.

"Them's my sentiments," replied the man, "here's at you."

Soon as the whiskey was drunk, Garcia said:

"There is nothing like going it while you are young."

This was the signal agreed upon, and Brian and Murphy threw themselves upon the owner of the boat, and quickly dispatched him with their knives, likewise the boy.

"Bring the horses on board," he said, "and let us be off."

His order was obeyed, the rope holding the boat was cut, and Brian and Murphy pulled at the sweeps until the middle of the river was reached, when the bodies were thrown overboard.

But about twelve o'clock the night after they started, the boat suddenly began to pitch and toss about fearfully, and Murphy, who was steering, stamped on the deck and shouted for all hands to turn out.

"What's the matter?" asked Garcia, as he climbed up on deck.

"Danged if I know," replied Murphy. "I believe we are in a whirlpool."

"Whirlpool be hanged!" exclaimed Brian, "we are being carried through a crevasse, and as likely as not the boat will be smashed to pieces against something."

After the boat had been carried along with frightful rapidity for nearly six miles, continually striking with such violence that it seemed as if it must inevitably go to pieces, Brian sung out:

"Now we are in for it; here is a house dead ahead, and we'll be afoul of it in no time."

There was a few moments of breathless suspense, and then, with an appalling crash, the bow of the boat struck against and cut through the side of a handsome farm dwelling.

The shock was so severe, that everyone was thrown prostrate, and it seemed as if the boat must be shivered to atoms; but the timbers clung together, though the seams were opened, and the water gushed in in torrents.

Almost immediately after striking, the stern was whirled around by the current, causing the boat to act as an immense lever, and tear off with its bow a large quantity of weather boarding; the boat was thus brought broadside against the house and began to sink rapidly.

The robbers hallooed, and knocked on the side of the house, but not receiving any reply, tore open a shutter, smashed a window to pieces, and climbed into the building.

The water on the floor was about knee-deep.

Brian scratched a match on his coat sleeve, and by its light saw a candle and lit it.

"Halloo!" he exclaimed as the light blazed up, "plenty of



fine furniture; the people must have left in a hurry, without taking anything with them."

"Ha!" cried Garcia, clutching him by the arm; "look at the bed; look, there is some one in it."

"He must be quite dead then; let us investigate."

Side by side Brian and Garcia approached the bed, Smith and Murphy bringing up the rear.

And stretched upon the sheets, pale, cold and motionless, with wide staring eyes, they saw the form of Colonel Robert Lenoir.

## CHAPTER XII.

### BANDY'S ESCAPE.

With the speed of lightning, Bandy fled after stabbing the negro who seized him.

On he rushed, tearing through briars and bumping against trees, scratching and bruising himself in a hundred different places.

Bandy strained every nerve, and whenever he was where the woods were thick enough to screen him from view, doubled and twisted about like a hunted hare, in hopes of throwing his bloodthirsty pursuers off of his track; but they followed him with the pertinacity of a pack of wolves after a wounded deer.

About an hour after the chase commenced, Bandy was conscious that he could not much longer keep up the pace necessary to beat his pursuers.

And soon after this disagreeable conviction forced itself on his mind, he slipped into a hole of water, which was so completely covered with scum and leaves that he did not discover it until he plumped into it up to his neck.

He quickly scrambled out not much the worse for his unexpected bath, but his heart sank in his bosom like lead, when he thought of the fact that the wetting made his pistols entirely useless.

Hope almost entirely deserted him, and his efforts relaxed to such a degree that before many minutes had passed, he found himself on the shore of the island, where it was bare of trees, with his pursuers so close at hand that he could not retrace his steps, or turn to the right or to the left without encountering them.

The shadow of death was over him.

For before him rolled the dark tide many miles in width, while out of the gloomy woods behind him, the yelling crew of ferocious negroes came swooping down on him like a flock of vultures.

Bandy's foes did not see him as they rushed past, and he was saved for the present. He looked off to the east, and his eyes rested on Anita sitting in the canoe, which by Fred's direction, she had paddled a hundred yards away from the island, and tied to a tree standing in the water.

Bandy immediately came to the conclusion that it was Fred in the canoe, and thought that he had acted very wisely in thus securing his safety, by paddling away from the island.

Bandy knew very well that if he were in the canoe, under the existing circumstances, that nothing could induce him to approach the land, and judging Fred by himself, thought it would be useless to halloo for help.

Though for that matter—but Bandy did not think of it—the person in the canoe could not very well fail to hear and see what happened on the water's edge, for the moon-light was nearly as bright as day.

Believing that there was now a chance for him to escape made Bandy a new man as it were, and he acted promptly and boldly.

Watching his chance when the limb upon which he was swinging up and down, reached the lowest point, he let go

all hold, and dropped from a height of some fifteen feet into the water.

The impetus of his descent carried him some distance under the water, but he soon came to the surface, and struck out towards the canoe.

"Don't come any nearer," said Anita, pointing the gun at him which Fred had left with her, "or I'll shoot you."

Up to this time, Bandy had not for an instant doubted that the person in the canoe was Fred, and on seeing that it was a girl, beautiful as an angel, but pale as a ghost, he thought that he was bewitched indeed, but managed to stammer out:

"It's Bandy."

"All right," answered Anita, "come on, then."

Bandy did not wait to be told twice, and in another minute was climbing into the canoe, a feat which he fortunately accomplished without overturning the ticklish little craft.

And no sooner did he get into the boat than he commenced with feverish haste to untie the rope which fastened it to the tree.

Bandy succeeded in untying the canoe, and seizing a paddle, commenced sending it through the water stern foremost, though that made very little difference, as the canoe was nearly as sharp at one end as the other.

"Stop?" said Anita; "what are you about?"

"I'se goin' 'way from dis place," replied Bandy, putting in his biggest licks.

"You must not go away and leave your master."

"I'll get de white gentlemens to come; we stay here now, bofe be killed, for sure."

"Stop, I tell you; paddle back instantly or I'll shoot you."

"Drudder be shot dan go back, anyway. Dar now! didn't I tole you so—hear dat?"

And just then crack—crack—crack! the sharp reports of a revolver rang out on the air, followed by unearthly yellings and howlings, indicating but too truly that Fred had already been discovered and attacked by the negroes.

In vain Anita threatened and begged by turns; Bandy continued to paddle with all his might, and the canoe, urged by his vigorous strokes and the swift current, shot onward through the overflowed forest, and Fred was left to his fate.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### CHASED BY A BULL.

As we have already mentioned, Fred was not able to join Bandy, or to interpose himself between the mulatto and his pursuers, because they ran about first in one direction and then in another.

But when Bandy was run to a stand-still on the edge of the island, and climbed a tree—as related in the preceding chapter—he remained for some time in the same place.

This gave Fred an opportunity to approach them, and when Bandy escaped to the canoe, Fred was not more than two hundred yards distant from the shore of the island nearest to the boat.

If he had hallooed then it is not improbable that Bandy might have been inspired with sufficient courage, by knowing that his master was near at hand, to obey Anita's order and remain with the canoe where it was at that time, tied to a tree.

But it never occurred to Fred, that if Bandy reached the canoe he would go away with it and leave him behind.

Fred had on heavy boots, and the crackling of dry twigs, which in the darkness he could not avoid treading on, made more or less noise nearly every step he took.

The bare feet of the negroes, however, scarcely produced any sound, and as they were too sullen to talk, the villainous gang wound their way through the woods silently in Indian file.

As they and Fred were moving in opposite directions on the



same line, it was not long before they were within a short distance of each other.

When the leading man of the black crew discovered Fred, they were only a few yards apart, so near, in fact, that a word uttered by either of them, even in a very low tone, would have been heard by the other.

Under the circumstances, a white man would have probably uttered an exclamation of surprise, or would at least have been at a loss how to warn his companions, who were strung out behind him in a line several yards long, that there was danger in front, and a necessity for caution, without, at the same time, apprising the enemy of their presence.

As soon as Fred saw the leader of the blacks he fired at him. Fred then sprang off to one side, from under the dense shade where he was attacked, wishing, if possible, to retreat towards the canoe, instead of retracing his steps towards the center of the island.

The moment he became visible in the moonlight, the rest of the negroes made a determined rush at him, and he fired again.

The bullet missed the man he aimed at, and slightly wounded a large white bull, which was with some other cattle, in a thicket behind the negroes.

The bull had been running at large in the forest for years, and, when aroused, was as savage as any wild animal.

On feeling the sting of the wound, he uttered a furious bellow, and charged the negroes like a thunderbolt, scattering them like chaff, and tossing one of them up into a small honey-locust tree, where the long keen thorns held him fast, and thereby saved him from being gored to death, but caused him to howl with agony.

All of the negroes, except the one which was hung up in the honey-locust out of reach, having disappeared like smoke, the bull dashed after Fred, who was trying to get out of the way, but was still in sight.

After making a few jumps, Fred found himself in an old road which was overgrown with grass, except in the middle, where there was a beaten path.

Along the smooth path Fred could run with so much greater ease and speed, that he stuck to it, and before long, to his dismay, discovered that he had passed out from among the trees, and was in an almost open space of some extent.

The place was no doubt an old Indian field, the soil of which had been so completely exhausted by long cultivation, without an ounce of fertilizing material being put on it, that now, after lying fallow for years, it only produced a few straggling bushes and briars, which were miserably insufficient to either shelter or hide Fred from the furious creature which was pressing on him.

The bull was so close behind him that it was impossible for Fred to turn back, and he saw with a sinking heart that it was some seventy-five yards to the woods in front of him.

He thought of trying his pistols, but wisely concluded that he had better not resort to their use except in the last extremity, as there was very little probability that, with weapons carrying such small balls, he could kill or disable the bull before it would destroy him.

So he relied on his heels, and ran as only a man can run when his life is at stake; and after him, with bloodshot eyes and tail on end, thundered along the implacable bull.

Fred's exertions were so tremendous that it seemed as if his very heart would burst.

He had almost reached the edge of the woods when he felt the hot breath of the bull on his back, and was nerving himself to spring to one side, and thus gain time to try the desperate chance afforded by his pistols, when the ground gave way beneath him, and he shot downward out of sight.

With the agility of a deer the bull bounded over the opening

through which Fred had disappeared, then wheeling around, returned to the edge of the yawning cavity, pawing the ground, lashing his sides with his tail, and bellowing as if he were more than half inclined to take a jump in the dark himself.

But Fred was in no condition to care what his bovine enemy was doing.

Will had fallen through an opening which was artfully concealed with grass and earth, exactly like the coverings of pit-falls which are made for the capture of large game.

But when he went crashing through the light net-work of sticks and grass which covered the opening, he did not fall into an ordinary pit-fall.

Down he went into almost stygian darkness, whirling over and over until he struck on the floor of an underground apartment with such violence that the breath was completely knocked out of him, and he lay like one bereft of life.

No bones were broken, however, though he made an exceedingly narrow escape from instant death.

It was some time before Fred could climb out of the hole. The bull was not in sight.

Murmuring devout thanks for his almost miraculous escape, he hastened away from the dangerous locality.

But he was caught by the negroes again and taken to one of their underground dens. Fearful that they would discover the papers on his person, he enclosed them in a shell and buried them in the ground. Some days after he escaped from the negroes.

If Fred had not had anyone else to think of but himself, he would have left the island as soon as he could find a log which would float with him on it.

But it was characteristic of him, that his first thoughts were of Anita and Bandy, and unarmed almost without clothes, and faint from long continued exertions as he was, he resolved not to leave the island until he had made an attempt to find them.

Keeping near the edge of the water, Fred rapidly but cautiously made his way towards the place where he had left Anita in the canoe.

His progress was very painful, for he was bare-footed, and the undershirt and pair of drawers which were all the clothing he had on, were very little protection from the briars.

He did not see or hear anything of the negroes, but several times he came suddenly on wild animals, which, however, fled from him without making any hostile demonstrations, though once he saw two wolves that were evidently following him; but on facing them and throwing a chunk of wood towards them, the cowardly creatures dashed into the bushes and disappeared.

At length, foot-sore, and bleeding from innumerable scratches, Fred reached the point on the shore of the island opposite to which he had left Anita.

But as the reader is already aware, the girl had been carried off—much against her will—in the canoe by Bandy.

Fred now considered that it would be useless for him to remain on the island any longer, and determined to make his way to Lake Pontchartrain, in hopes of being picked up by some passing vessel.

He also resolved that if he did not ascertain that Anita and Bandy had escaped, he would return with some men and search the island thoroughly.

As for the memorandum about the stolen papers, which he had placed in a shell, and buried, he did not feel certain whether it would be best to return from New Orleans to look for it, or to send to Cincinnati, and get the information directly from the quadroon woman Maria; but in that matter he determined to be guided by the advice of his lawyer.

Looking along the shore of the island, against which a considerable quantity of dead timber had already drifted,



he was lucky enough to find a cypress log some twelve feet long, and about thirty inches in diameter; it had probably been cut by some shingle maker years before, for it was dry as tinder, and floated like a cork; a better substitute for a canoe could scarcely have been found.

Providing himself with a stick about the size of his wrist, and some seven or eight feet long—to be used in keeping himself clear of trees—Fred pushed the cypress log out of the raft of driftwood where he found it, and got astride of it, with his legs hanging down in the water on either side.

He then called out as loud as he could, three times, for Anita and Bandy.

Receiving no answer to his calls, Fred shoved his log from the island, and just as the mists of the morning began to crawl along the surface of the water, started on his perilous voyage.

And perilous it was, indeed, for the trackless forest through which he expected to drift extended for miles, he knew not how far, and with nothing to keep him afloat except a log, upon which he had to sit with his legs in the water, he would be constantly liable to catch the cramp, and be powerless to keep his seat, or might fall an easy prey to some alligator.

And even supposing that he should pass through the forest safely, he would then be in Lake Pontchartrain, a very large body of water, where he might be washed off of the log by the waves, or drift about, until he was unable to retain his hold, or starved to death.

Notwithstanding the fact that Fred fully appreciated the dangers to which he was about to be exposed, he had escaped from so many perils that he felt confident he would succeed in securing his safety.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### TRAPPED.

Borne by the current, the log glided swiftly through the dim arches of the overflowed forest.

Fred soon found that it required close and unremitting attention to steer his novel craft clear of obstacles, and to keep it from rolling over.

Several times it turned over so quickly that he was ducked, but he soon learned the necessity of sitting steady, and then he got on more smoothly.

He had not eaten anything since the day before at dinner-time, and now that his mind was in some degree relieved from the intense strain to which it had been subjected, he began to suffer the pangs of hunger.

Nor was that the worst, for before long, he became chilled through and through.

He shivered as if he had the ague, his teeth chattered, and he began to lose heart.

Still, however, he clung to his log like grim death, determining not to give up so long as he could stir a finger.

Several hours passed, and he became so drowsy that he could scarcely keep his eyes open; leaning forward he crossed his arms on the log, and laying his head on them almost instantly dozed away.

But the log was not a craft that could navigate itself in a very satisfactory manner; in a few minutes it came in contact with a tree, swung around, and turning over, dumped Fred into the water, and he found that it was no easy matter to get back on it again; for he had grown so stiff that he could scarcely use his limbs.

Making a mental resolution that he would not be caught napping again, he was drifting onward feeling terribly depressed, when to his great joy, he heard the report of a gun at no great distance, almost directly in front of him.

He shouted, and there was an answering halloo, and in

a few minutes he caught sight of a skiff in which there were three persons.

Fred called out to them, and expected that they would at once row toward him, but they did nothing of the kind; however, they allowed the skiff to drift broadside against two trees, which kept it stationary.

Fred thought that this was very singular behavior, but he, nevertheless, by pushing with his stick or his hands, as the case might be, first against one tree and then against another, guided his log toward the skiff.

On approaching it, he saw that the persons in it were two swarthy, black-eyed young men—evidently brothers—one of whom was about his age, and the other several years younger, and a stout negro man who was at the oars.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Fred, when he was in speaking distance, "I am glad to see you fellows."

"Sorry I can't return the compliment," replied the elder of the young men, curtly.

About a minute afterwards the log came in contact with the skiff, into which Fred was about to climb, when the young man who had replied to Fred's remark, handled a gun which he held, in rather a hostile manner, and said:

"See here," young man, you are making very free with our boat."

"Great Heavens!" exclaimed Fred, "is it possible that you object to my getting into the skiff?"

"Yes, it is quite possible; the boat is already pretty well loaded! and we expect to get some more deer before we start for home."

"But surely you would not leave a fellow creature to perish for the sake of a little game?"

"I don't see why we should incommode ourselves for a vagabond whom we find drifting about on a log."

"I am no vagabond," replied Fred, indignantly; "and am able to pay handsomely for the assistance I need."

"You look very much like it," sneered the young man. "In my opinion, you are some poor white trash, who has not a shirt to his back."

"I own a plantation near Guion's Landing on the Mississippi, also some property in the vicinity of New Orleans, and my name is Fred Lenoir."

Fred had scarcely finished speaking, before the young man who had not spoken before, cried out:

"We'll see you hung before we'll help you! We are——"

"Hold your tongue, you fool!" fiercely broke in his brother, interrupting him; "if the gentleman is, as he says, able to pay for our trouble, of course we will aid him."

Then addressing Fred, he said:

"Get into the boat; I'll trust to your honor to pay us for what we lose in the way of game by taking you in."

"You will not lose anything by me," replied Fred, crawling into the boat, "and now if you have anything to eat and drink, let me have some of it, for I am almost famished."

"Help yourself," and the young man handed Fred a bottle of whiskey, a tin cup, and an earthenware vessel, in which there was some corn bread, bacon, and salt fish.

The negro was then directed to go to the lake, and he shoved the skiff off from the trees against which it had been resting, and commenced to row.

Fred drank a little of the whiskey and eat some of the provisions, all the time wondering why the faces of the two young men looked so familiar to him, for he felt certain that he had never seen either of them before.

Fred did not think that there would be any use in his speaking to his present companions about his adventures on the island, but he asked:

"Have you seen anything of a canoe, with a young lady and a mulatto boy in it?"



"No," was the answer, "we have not seen any canoe at all to-day."

"Which way are you going? I'd like to get to New Orleans as soon as possible."

"We are going in that direction, and if nothing happens, you ought to reach the city by seven or eight o'clock this evening."

"Good! Then I'll take a nap, I believe," saying which Fred stretched himself on the bottom of the boat, and laying his head on the body of a deer—several of which were in the skiff—fell into a profound slumber.

Tired and worn out as he was, however, it is not at all probable that he would have slept so well, had he seen the significant glances which the young men exchanged, and the looks of animosity with which they regarded him.

When the lake—which was about two miles distant—was reached, a mast was stepped in the boat and a sail spread.

Fred continued to sleep, and did not awaken until the eldest of the young men shook him by the arm, at about half-past four o'clock in the afternoon.

On getting up, Fred found that the boat was moored at the foot of a lawn, which extended to a rambling, old-fashioned country house.

"Wrap this around you," said the young man, handing Fred a blanket, "until you get to the house."

Fred then followed the young man to the house who conducted him into a large, unfurnished room in the basement, and remarked:

"There are some women about the house, so you had better remain here until I see what can be done for you in the way of clothing."

Thereupon he left the room, closed the door and locked it on the outside.

Before Fred had time to consider the singularity of this proceeding, a small panel in the center of the door was shoved to one side, and the young man's dark, handsome face, upon which there was a grin of malignant triumph, made its appearance at the opening.

"Allow me to introduce myself," he said, in an ironical tone; "my name is Alva, and you are now in the house of my grandfather, Gomez Alva, whose property you and your pretended father have enjoyed for many years past."

"You are a liar!" replied Fred, hotly, replying to the latter part of the other's remark.

"I'll pay you for that, and in the meantime, you had as well know that you will never leave this place alive, without the court decides that you are our slave, and if that is done before you come out, I'll mark your back with a cow-hide, so that there will be no trouble in identifying you if you run away."

When he heard this savage threat, Fred gave the speaker a look of contempt, and said:

"Bah! I don't care to bandy words with a coward."

"You'll sing another tune before I'm through with you," replied young Alva, with a jeering laugh, and shutting the panel he went away.

Looking around him, Fred found that the windows of the room were heavily barred with iron, and that the door was massive, and thickly studded with nails.

Then he remembered that his father had said: "You had a thousand times better die, than to fall into the hands of the Alvas alive."

## CHAPTER XV.

### FRED IN PRISON—A RAY OF HOPE.

It did not take Fred long to examine the place in which he was confined.

It was a room about twenty feet long, and twelve feet wide,

and had three windows, all of which were covered with a heavy grating of iron bars.

The floor was about four feet below the surface of the ground outside, down to which the windows extended.

The room was in the southwest corner of the building. One of the windows commanded a view of the lawn and lake, and the other two looked into a large garden in which grew, not only vegetables, but many kinds of semi-tropical flowers, also oranges and lemons.

Opening into this garden was a door, which lay flat with the ground, like an ordinary cellar door, and which was made of heavy bars of wood, some four inches square, and secured by a strong chain and padlock.

There was no furniture of any description in the room; in fact, there was nothing whatever in it, except an old barrel, one end of which was out.

Just before sun-down, the door through which Fred was admitted to the room was opened a few inches, and a pitcher of water, and a plate containing a pretty good supply of food was set inside on the floor, and then the door was closed.

Wisely concluding that, in any event, it would do him no good to starve, Fred availed himself of the opportunity, and by the fast waning light, made a hearty meal.

A few hours after dark, the inmates of the house apparently all retired to rest, for everything was still, except a number of dogs which could be heard running to and fro, and barking occasionally.

Soon as he thought it was safe to do so, Fred tried to remove some of the bars across the windows, but his utmost strength was insufficient to move any of them.

With a sinking heart, Fred concluded that it was impossible for him to escape without assistance, and wrapping himself in the blanket which was given him to throw over himself while coming to the house, he laid down, and, annoyed by swarms of mosquitoes, passed a most uncomfortable night.

The next morning, early, a breakfast was brought to him, and about nine o'clock the panel in the door was shoved to one side, and a man's wicked-looking, wrinkled face, surmounted by gray hair, made its appearance at the opening.

He did not speak, but stared at Fred with a look of exultation.

"You had better let me out of here," said Fred, returning his stare, "or you will suffer for it."

"Pooh!" was the contemptuous reply; "I am your master, Gomez Alva, and if you put on any airs with me, I'll give you thirty-nine lashes on the bare back."

"You dare not do it."

"Yes, I do, and what's more," here Alva's voice sank into a savage whisper, "I'll cut your throat before you shall escape."

Fred reflected that there was nothing to be gained by aggravating those who had him in their power, so he made no further reply, and in a few minutes Gomez Alva went away.

After that, for two days, no one came to the door—as far as Fred knew—except a negro whose hand and wrist could only be seen, when, twice a day, he opened the door a little, and taking away the plates and pitchers in which food and water had been brought, replaced them with others, in which there was a fresh supply.

Once Fred tried to pull the door wide open when food was brought him, but found that it was secured with a chain which kept it from opening more than a few inches.

Occasionally, white and colored persons were seen passing to and fro in the grounds, and several times Fred called out to them, but no attention was paid to his cries.

Early in the forenoon of the third day, he saw a graceful-looking girl, wearing a light-colored morning dress, and wide-brimmed straw hat, in the garden, sauntering about between



the rows of plants, inhaling their various perfumes, as if she were one of those fabled beings that lived upon sweet odors.

After a while she began to make a bouquet, and as she now and then stood on tiptoe to reach a flower overhead, or stooped to cull those which grew near to the ground, Fred could not help admiring the willowy grace of her movements, and the symmetry of her little feet and hands; her wide-brimmed hat, however, concealed her face, so that Fred could only get an occasional glimpse of a dimpled chin.

At length, having apparently procured as many flowers as she wished, the girl came towards the house, and happened to take a walk which led straight towards the basement room in which Fred was confined, and he began debating in his mind whether he should address her or not.

Her hat was pulled forward so that he could not see her face, and she was apparently absorbed in looking at the flowers in her hand, until she was within about ten feet of the house, when she threw back her head.

Fred's heart gave a great bound, and he exclaimed: "Anita!"

He saw before him the girl whom he rescued from the Indian mound.

On hearing her name called she looked towards Fred, and when she saw him uttered a cry of surprise; but then as if suddenly recollecting something, pressed her finger on her lips as a sign for him to keep silent, and turned off towards the front of the building, around the corner of which she vanished from his sight.

As may readily be imagined, Fred was much excited by seeing Anita, and eagerly wished for an opportunity to talk to her, as he had no doubt that she would assist him to escape, if possible.

He felt satisfied that she would return when she could do so without being observed, and wondered if it would be that night, or not until the next day.

He saw her, however, much sooner than he expected; for about two o'clock that afternoon she took advantage of the time when the inmates of the house were enjoying their siesta, and came to one of the windows of the basement room that Fred was confined in.

After salutations were exchanged, Anita explained how she came to leave Fred on the island, and stated that she and Bandy had reached the lake without accident, and were lucky enough to be picked up by a schooner, which enabled her to reach home, and Bandy the Lenoir residence, which was near at hand, without difficulty.

Fred briefly told what had happened to him and said:

"I hope you will help me to get out of here."

"I'll do anything I can," she replied; "but the young men who brought you here are my brothers, and I hope you won't have them punished if you get away?"

"So they are your brothers, are they? That accounts for their faces appearing so familiar to me; for your sake, then, I'll promise not to molest them if they let me alone."

It will be remembered that after the assassination of Fred's uncle, Tom Lenoir, that Garcia Alva fled to Texas, leaving his wife, three sons and a daughter with his father.

The young men who entrapped Fred, and whose names were respectively Carlos and Alonzo, were two of these sons, Anita was the daughter, and the other boy died soon after his father went to Texas.

"But how am I to get you out? that is the question," said Anita.

"All you will have to do," replied Fred, "is to let my father's lawyer, Mr. William Harrison, of No. — Camp street, New Orleans, know of my condition, and he will come out with the sheriff and enough men to release me."

"Oh, I would not do that; the officers would arrest my grand-

father and brothers, and if Carlos—he's my oldest brother—were to see them coming, he might kill you, he has such an ungovernable temper."

"Well, can't you get the key and unlock the door which opens into the gardens, so that at night I can get out and go away?"

"I'll try; but I'll have to be here when you get out."

"Why?"

"Because the dogs would tear you to pieces."

"Do as you think best, then, but I don't want you exposed to any danger."

"Oh, the dogs won't harm me; now, good-by; I'll see you to-morrow," and she gave Fred her hand through the bars.

"Good-by," he replied, kissing her hand.

"You must not do that," she exclaimed, blushing deeply, and withdrawing her hand, she went into the house.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE BLOODHOUND—A FLIGHT IN THE DARK.

For three successive days and nights, Anita came to the basement room with keys, which she managed to collect about the house, without being observed, but none of them would fit the lock.

Then, at Fred's suggestion, she took an impression of the lock with wax, and the next day went to New Orleans—which was only a few miles distant—and had a key made.

But from some cause or other, probably because she and Fred were ignorant of the proper way to take an impression in wax, the key would not unlock the padlock.

"You will have to get me some files," said Fred, "or a hand-saw, I think, would be better, because I can saw the wooden bars the door is made of in two quicker than I can cut through the chains with a file."

That very night Anita brought him a saw, and he concealed it in the old barrel, determining to wait for a stormy night before using it, as every thing was usually so still after dark, that he knew that the sound of sawing would be sure to attract attention, without there was something to drown it.

Though Fred's escape was thus delayed, he did not find the time hang so heavily on his hands as might have been expected.

In short Fred and Anita fell desperately in love with each other, and regardless of the quarrel between their families, "pledged themselves together forever and a day."

On the fourth night after Fred got the saw, there was a furious storm, and the howling of the wind, the frequent bursts of thunder, and the roaring of the waves of the lake made a deafening uproar.

Taking advantage of this, Fred commenced to saw into the bars of the grated door which opened into the garden.

But he had scarcely cut through one of the bars, before the dogs were attracted to the spot by the sound of the saw, and began to growl at him.

But in a few minutes Anita, unterrified by the war of the elements, made her appearance, wrapped in a waterproof cloak, and pacified the dogs, so that Fred resumed his sawing, and soon cut a hole through which he issued forth from his prison.

The dogs sniffed at him suspiciously, but Fred did not notice them; he wound his arms around the brave girl who had risked so much for him, and pressed upon her sweet lips a long, lingering kiss, which told in language stronger than words his boundless devotion.

Suddenly the sound of a window hastily thrown up was heard, and Anita, releasing herself from Fred's embrace, and whispering:

"Fly for your life, we are discovered," seized the collar of Uncas, the huge, tawny bloodhound.



Nor was she any too soon, for the next moment Carlos Alva put his head out of an up stairs window, and exclaimed:

"Watch him, Uncas!" and the bloodhound growled, and would have flown at Fred, if he had not been restrained.

Moving rapidly but quietly across the garden, Fred had got within twenty yards of the fence, when a vivid flash of lightning lit up the scene, and Carlos Alva saw and recognized him, and shouted:

"Whoop! catch him, Uncas! sick him, boy!"

Barking savagely, the huge bloodhound made a spring which broke Anita's hold on his collar and darted after Fred.

Hearing the fierce animal as it rushed towards him, Fred faced about and prepared to defend himself with the hand-saw, which luckily he had kept in his hand.

Fortunately the thin, serrated edge of the saw struck the skull of the bloodhound and split it.

Disabled, but not slain outright, the fierce beast rolled on the ground, howling with pain, and Fred, intimidating the other dogs by brandishing the saw, ran to the fence.

Just as he was in the act of throwing himself over the fence, there was another flash of lightning, and by its ghastly glare Carlos Alva aimed at him with a double-barrelled shot-gun, charged with buckshot, and fired both barrels almost simultaneously.

The distance from the house—out of a window of which Carlos fired—to the fence on the opposite side of the garden, was about seventy-five yards, and though some of the buckshot struck close to Fred, and others whistled by him in a way which was far from pleasant, he was not hit.

Dropping down on the outside of the fence, he made quick time to the Lenoir residence, which was not quite a mile distant.

On reaching the place, he at once aroused the negroes who had charge of it, and with them found Bandy, who was so overjoyed to see his young master safe and sound, that Fred did not have the heart to scold him for his desertion.

Fred's dress, from the time he was entrapped by the Alvas, was decidedly more picturesque than comfortable for it consisted simply of a pair of drawers, a shirt, and a blanket, through a hole in which he thrust his head, and wore it as a kind of poncho.

So, after ordering the negroes to saddle a horse for him, and one for Bandy, Fred went into the house, and rigged himself out in some clothes which he had left there, shortly after he came from New York with his father.

Fred did not have any arms, but had it been otherwise, for obvious reasons, he was anxious to avoid a collision with Anita's brothers.

Therefore, as soon as he had completed his toilet, he mounted one of the horses he had ordered, and followed by Bandy on the other, galloped off towards New Orleans, though the storm was still raging with unabated fury.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE OF COLONEL LENOIR'S BODY—THE PLOT THICKENS.

Fred and Bandy reached New Orleans in safety, and took up their quarters at a hotel.

At ten o'clock the next morning—which was the earliest hour that he could be seen at his office—Fred called on Mr. William Harrison, who for many years had been Colonel Lenoir's agent and lawyer.

Mr. Harrison was both astonished and shocked when he was told that Colonel Lenoir was dead, and heard what had happened to Fred.

"It is fortunate that you are here to-day, anyway," he

said, when Fred had concluded his narrative; "for the case of Alva vs. Lenoir is on the docket for trial to-morrow.

"I don't see what good my being here will do," replied Fred, "as I have failed to get the stolen papers."

"You can make an affidavit to the facts you have told me, and with that, I can get the court to grant a continuance, which will give us time to get the papers."

Mr. Harrison thereupon drew up an affidavit, setting forth the facts in relation to the stolen papers, and the death of Colonel Lenoir, with which the reader is already familiar, and stating that without the missing documents it would not be safe for the defendants to have the case tried, and that if a reasonable length of time was given the papers could be procured.

All of which Fred swore to before a notary public, and the next day Mr. Harrison filed the affidavit, and made a motion to have the case of Gomez Alva, versus Robert Lenoir, et al, continued.

The motion was bitterly opposed by the lawyer of Gomez Alva, but the court, after listening to the argument of counsel, ordered that the case be set for trial one month from that time.

"Now," said Mr. Harrison, as he and Fred left the court room together, "do you think you can find the memorandum which you buried in the shell?"

"I am afraid that it will be like looking for a needle in a haystack," replied Fred.

"Well, you can try, but at the same time we had better send a detective to Cincinnati, and get the desired information Maria."

"Suppose you make out free-papers for her, and let me sign them, and send them by the detective so that he can get her to come back with him."

"A very good idea, that will guard against accidents."

Papers were accordingly prepared manumitting Maria, and a detective started to Cincinnati with them that afternoon.

Being desirous of finding out what disposition had been made of his father's body, Fred took Bandy with him, went up to Guion's Landing on a steamboat, procured a skiff, and went out to the Lenoir plantation.

When Fred arrived at the plantation, he was astonished to see the wreck of the trading boat jammed into the side of the dwelling.

And to his unbounded amazement, he ascertained that the body of his father had disappeared before the overseer returned to the place, which he did on the third day after Fred and Bandy left.

On examining the interior of the house, everything was found in the greatest disorder.

Desks, wardrobes, and closets had been broken open, and their contents carried away, or scattered about in the water which covered the floors of the rooms, and pictures, statuettes, mirrors, and many other articles of furniture, had been wantonly destroyed.

None of the negroes had seen or heard anyone about the house, from the time Fred left, until the overseer returned, but that was not to be wondered at, as the quarters where they lived were half a mile from the dwelling, and the overflow had kept them from crossing the intervening space.

Fred, of course, was not slow to attribute the plundering and destruction to the Alva gang, but he could not imagine why they should have molested his father's body.

Finally, however, he concluded that through a miserable cowardly spirit of revenge, the body of his father had been thrown out of the house into the water, and was carried off by the current, and in this opinion Mr. Harrison coincided when he heard about the matter.

Day after day, for nearly three weeks, Fred and Bandy in



one canoe, and the overseer with a negro man in another, paddled to and fro through the overflowed forest, searching for the island upon which was the Indian mound, but strange to say, could not find it.

Then on receiving a letter from Mr. Harrison requesting him to do so, Fred went down to New Orleans.

"What luck?" asked Mr. Harrison, when Fred entered his office.

"None," replied Fred; "I cannot find the Indian mound."

"That's bad, and I have news which is no better."

"What?"

"The detective has returned from Cincinnati, and reports that before he got there Maria went away with a man who represented himself to be an agent of Colonel Lenoir's, and there is no clew to where she has gone."

"The Alvas must have had her carried away."

"No doubt, but that makes the matter all the worse for us, as they will take good care to keep her out of the way."

"What am I to do, then?"

"There are eight days between this and the time when your case will be tried, and if I were you, I would devote every available moment to searching for the memorandum about the papers."

"Suppose I cannot get the papers, what then?"

"If you do not, sure as the sun shines, the Alvas will gain the suit, they will come into the possession of the Lenoir property, you will be adjudged to be their slave, and the names of your father and mother will be branded with infamy."

"I do not think it possible to find the Indian mound in the time you speak of."

"Why?"

"The river is falling rapidly, the flow of water through the crevasse will probably cease to-day, and in twenty-four hours more, the water in the overflow forest will run off, leaving a deep, sticky mud, through which it will be almost impossible to pass."

"Well, there is nothing like trying, but soon as you conclude that your search is hopeless, leave the country at once."

"Is that your advice?"

"It is, and I give it without hesitation, both as a lawyer and the life-long friend of yourself and father."

"I am very much obliged to you, I am sure, but I will not run away."

"This is madness."

"Perhaps so, but my determination is fixed as fate."

"When will I see you again?"

"Upon the day of trial, if not before. Good-day;" and turning on his heel, Fred left the office.

"It is a pity, by Jove, it is a pity;" mused Mr. Harrison, "but one thing is certain, if the Alvas attempt to make a slave of that boy, there will be blood spilt."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### HOW FRED FOUND THE INDIAN MOUND.

There are a number of Voudou doctors in New Orleans, who are in great repute among the negroes, and it is no uncommon thing for the Creoles to consult them in case of sickness, and for the purpose of recovering stolen property.

After leaving Mr. Harrison's office, Fred looked up several of these black doctors, and endeavored to bribe them to guide him to the Indian mound.

But every one of them denied all knowledge of any such place; they evidently either feared to trust Fred, or dreaded the vengeance of the other Voudou negroes, if they revealed any of their secrets.

Disappointed in that quarter, Fred sought some of the men who made a business of supplying the New Orleans market with wild-fowl, and other game.

These huntsmen are a peculiar, and, in many respects, a remarkable class of men.

Without much trouble Fred engaged six of these men to assist him in searching for the Indian mound.

But after paying to Buillaume Demaret, the captain, or head man of the party, a portion of the sum agreed upon for their services, Fred found out that the Creole huntsmen—in one respect at least—were like Canadian voyageurs: having money in hand, they could not be induced to leave the city until they had a carouse.

During the time which he waited for the huntsmen, Fred endeavored to communicate with Anita; but the negro whom he employed to convey a note to her and get an answer, reported, after visiting the Alva residence, that she had been closely confined ever since Fred's escape.

After a day's delay, Fred became disgusted and concluded to go ahead with Bandy, and leave the hunters to follow him.

Determining to commence the search from Lake Pontchartrain, instead of from the plantation back of Guion's Landing, as he had formerly done, Fred proceeded to the Lenoir residence, and the next morning at daylight, he and Bandy—well provided with arms and provisions, and a dog to keep watch at night—embarked in a canoe and started on their momentous expedition.

Early as the hour was, there were numbers of fishermen already abroad, either fishing or proceeding to different points on the lake, therefore Fred paid no attention to a canoe containing three persons, which, at a respectful distance, followed in the wake of his boat.

Yet the occupants of the canoe were our old acquaintances, Red Crow, the half-breed, and the two young Alvas, Carlos and Alonzo, who were following Fred, for the purpose of preventing him from returning to New Orleans before the case of Gomez Alva vs. Robert Lenoir, et al., was decided.

The half-breed and his companions had been instructed to capture Fred alive, but if that was impossible, and there was no other way to keep him from returning to the city before the time specified, to kill him.

Hour after hour passed, but the respective positions of the two canoes continued pretty much the same, and at no time during the day were they near enough together for their occupants to distinguish each other's features.

Fred and Bandy plied their paddles to such good purpose, that a little before sun-down, they arrived at a place which Fred thought was the point at which he reached the lake with the young Alvas, after his escape from the island.

Landing on a spot which had not been submerged during the overflow, Fred and Bandy eat a hearty meal, and were soon fast asleep.

During the night, Red Crow and his companions paddled softly towards the place, hoping to surprise Fred and the mulatto while they slept, but the dog began to bark, and the half-breed thought it best to retire without attempting to land.

From the appearance of the overflowed forest in the evening, Fred was in hopes, that for a day at least, it would be possible to proceed in the canoe, but while he slumbered the water subsided steadily, and in the morning the canoe had to be abandoned.

Proceeding on foot was difficult, and disagreeable in the extreme.

As Fred and Bandy proceeded, their way grew yet more wild and gloomy; their feet sank deep into the tenacious mire, and the tangled brush of the swamp—seemingly almost impervious to the eye—was traversed with extreme difficulty.

The forest was so dense that the winds could scarcely find their way through it, and the heat was stifling.



All day long under such disheartening circumstances, Fred and Bandy toiled along, and at night they did not fare much better, for there was not a foot of dry ground to be found, and they had to pass the time among the limbs of a tree, while thousands of birds and reptiles, alligators, enormous bull-frogs and owls, made the hours of darkness hideous with their bellowing, hooting and shrieking.

Consequently, any thing like sound sleep was, of course, out of the question, and in the morning they descended from their perches stiff, sore and unrefreshed, and pressed forward.

This was the experience of Fred and Bandy for three days and nights, and Red Crow and the young Alvas who followed on their trail—but kept out of sight—fared the same way.

Several times during the fourth day, Fred thought he passed places which he had seen before, and just after sunset reached some comparatively elevated ground that was dry, and which he had strong hopes was near the Indian mound.

Half dead with fatigue and want of sleep, he and Bandy fell asleep soon as they had eaten something, though a light rain began to fall directly after dark.

Seeing the elevated ground, and desiring to sleep on it, but wishing—for the time being—to avoid coming in contact with Fred, the half-breed and his companions made a slight detour and stumbled upon the Indian mound, which was not more than a hundred yards from where Fred was.

Not suspecting that the locality was dangerous, Red Crow and his companions laid down close to the leeward side of the mound, where they were to some degree protected from the fine driving rain, and were soon buried in profound slumbers.

Towards morning, a considerable party of Voudou negroes coming to the mound, discovered them and fell upon them with knives and clubs.

Alonzo, the youngest of the Alvas, was instantly killed, but Red Crow struggled desperately, and wounded two of his assailants before he was dispatched.

Happening to be screened by a thick bush, Carlos Alva was not at first observed, and before he had received a scratch, sprang to his feet and fled for his life, and was hotly pursued by part of the negroes.

Awakened by the shouts and yells, Fred and Bandy started up gun in hand, and by the dim light saw Carlos and his pursuers bounding towards them.

"Halt!" cried Fred, "or I'll fire."

No attention was paid to the order, and almost immediately afterwards a club hurled by one of the negroes struck Carlos on the head, and making a long stumbling fall, he dropped on the ground a few yards in front of Fred.

Before the negroes could reach him, however, Fred and Bandy both fired, killing one, and wounding another.

The negroes recoiled, but being reinforced until there was at least a dozen of them, all of whom had pistols, returned to the attack, sheltering themselves behind trees as much as possible, but advancing steadily, and keeping up a brisk fire.

Finding that they were in danger of being surrounded, Fred and Bandy were on the point of retreating, when——

"Morbleu! sacre!" roared two or three voices. "Fire on the black dogs!"

And immediately half a dozen guns were discharged, killing four of the negroes, and putting the rest to flight.

"Is that you, Damaret?" shouted Fred.

"Oui," was the answer; "who calls?"

"Fred Lenoir," and the next minute the party of Creole hunters made their appearance.

Their opportune arrival was an exemplification of the old adage that "there is luck in leisure," for though they left New Orleans two days after Fred did, they had, by navigating a bayou which empties into the lake, arrived in the

vicinity of the mound the evening before, and what was more, had come all the way in their canoes.

When Fred came to examine the person who was knocked down in front of him, he was astonished to find that it was Carlos Alva.

He had received a severe blow which raised a large bump on the back of his head, and laid open the scalp for several inches.

The wound was bound up, and cold water sprinkled in his face, but he continued insensible.

Day now broke, and Fred, discovering the mound, proceeded to it, accompanied by Bandy and five of the hunters.

By the foot of the mound, the corpses of Alonzo and Red Crow were found.

Entering the mound, Fred and his comrades discovered an open trap-door, with a ladder leading down below.

After facing and overcoming almost insurmountable difficulties, Fred was now, as far as he could judge, on the eve of securing the much coveted memorandum about the missing papers, but instead of being elated, his mind was filled with forebodings of impending evil, which he could not account for.

Unable to dismiss his apprehensions, but knowing that it was a time for action, and not for indulging in idle fancies, he directed that some torches be made to furnish light for exploring the gloomy and mysterious underground apartments.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE DAMAGE DONE BY ONE BULLET.

Soon as the torches were made and lit, Fred, with the creole hunters and Bandy, descended the ladder, and found themselves in an underground passage some five feet wide, that extended in an opposite direction from the place in which Fred was formerly confined.

Holding their weapons ready for use at a moment's notice, the party followed the passage for a distance of about fifty yards, and came to a strong door secured with a large bar of wood.

Removing the bar of wood and pulling open the door, they entered the room lined with phosphorescent wood, which Fred at once recognized as the place where he buried the shell containing the memorandum.

Fred began his search for the shell, and in a few minutes found it; determining not to run any risk of losing the memorandum again, he took out the paper—which was stained with his father's blood—unfolded and read:

"The tin box con-

taining the papers \* \*

concealed under the \* \* \* \* \*

The space indicated by asterisks had been cut out by the bullet which pierced Colonel Lenoir's side when attacked by the robbers, and the name of the place where the papers were hidden being thus destroyed, the memorandum was worthless.

Fred staggered as if he had received a mortal blow; it seemed as if the fates were against him, and he felt like a drowning man without even a straw to clutch at.

Listlessly turning the paper over, he saw on the other side of it the affidavit of Maria that he was not her child, only one unimportant word of which had been destroyed by the bullet; but this afforded no consolation to Fred, for he had been informed by his lawyer that the testimony of a slave could not be used in a suit in which white persons only are interested.

"Monsieur Lenoir," courteously said Dameret, the leader of the creoles, "I hope that there is nothing wrong."

"Yes, everything is wrong," replied Fred, "but not through any fault of yours."

"What do you wish us to do next?"



"Help me get back to New Orleans soon as possible; have you any room to spare in your canoes?"

"We would make room if necessary, but fortunately we found two canoes hidden in the bushes near where we landed last evening."

Fred then led the way back to the ladder, and up to the surface of the ground.

Carlos Alva had regained his consciousness, but was so weak that he could not stand, and maintained a sullen silence.

He and the corpse of his brother were placed in boats by the creole hunters. Fred and Bandy took possession of one of the canoes which had been found, and the party started back to the city.

Gliding swiftly over the surface of the bayou in the shade of the over-arching trees, with the water foaming and sparkling around the sharp prow of the canoe, was a very different thing from wading through the snake-infested swamp, but Fred was in no condition to care about the change.

He was dispirited and sick at heart, but he did not falter in his determination to return to New Orleans, though he knew that in all human probability, in less than twenty-four hours after arriving there, he would be an outlaw, a slave, or dead.

The next day, late in the afternoon, the party arrived at the Lenoir residence on the lake.

After sending Carlos Alva and the corpse of Alonzo to their grandfather's house by the creole hunters, Fred proceeded to New Orleans, which he reached after dark, and at once went to the residence of his lawyer.

Mr. Harrison, on being informed of the destruction of the papers, said:

"The case comes on for trial to-morrow, and I warn you that it will go against us, and conjure you to save yourself by leaving the country."

"I intend to stay and face the music," replied Fred.

"You will sacrifice your liberty or your life by doing so."

"Perhaps not; but now I must bid you good-night, for I am sadly in want of rest. I'll meet you at the court to-morrow."

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE SUIT BETWEEN THE ALVAS AND LENOIRS.

The Lenoir and Alva feud, the large amount involved in the suit, and the fact that Fred, after being reared in luxury, and with the expectation of enjoying a princely fortune, might be reduced to slavery, had been dilated and commented upon for weeks by the newspapers, creating a wide-spread interest.

Therefore, when Fred entered the court room next day, he found it crowded to suffocation, not only with men, but also with women, who rarely attend trials in the Crescent City.

Soon as Fred succeeded in working his way through the crowd and seated himself by Mr. Harrison, the audience knew who he was, and every eye was fixed upon him.

He was badly sun-burned, and his face was somewhat disfigured and swollen by scratches, and from the bites of insects received in the swamp, but his easy manners and general appearance produced a favorable impression.

At a table not very far from Fred, and facing him, sat Gomez Alva with George Morton, his counsel, and just behind them were Bill Brian, Garcia Alva, and four or five of the gang of robbers.

Soon as the minutes of the preceding day had been read and signed, the case of Gomez Alva vs. Robert Lenoir, et al—which being specially set for that day had precedence of other business—was called.

"Gentlemen," asked the judge, "are you ready to proceed with this case?"

"We are ready, your honor," said Alva's lawyer.

Mr. Harrison made a motion for another continuance, but it

was—as he expected—overruled by the judge, who ordered that the case should be tried, and a jury was impaneled.

George Morton, Alva's lawyer, a shrewd, plausible man, then opened the case as follows:

"May it please the court and gentlemen of the jury. Twenty-three years ago Juan Alva, a brother of my client, died, leaving all of his property to a daughter named Catalina, but directing in his will that if she died childless the estate should go to my client and his heirs.

"Catalina Alva afterwards married Robert Lenoir; and we are prepared to prove that during the second year of their wedded life, that despairing of having offspring of their own, they conspired with certain other parties to pass off the son of a quadroon woman slave as the child of Mrs. Lenoir, and that by means of this fraud my client has been kept out of the property which has rightfully belonged to him ever since the death of Catalina Lenoir, eighteen years ago, but which has during all of that long time been held and enjoyed by the said Robert Lenoir and his pretended son Fred, who we will show to be a slave, and the property of my client."

Having thus stated his case, Morton said:

"I will now offer in evidence the following receipt."

And he read:

"Received, New Orleans, April 10, 1817, of Colonel Robert Lenoir the sum of two thousand dollars, in full payment for medical and other services rendered at the time Fred Lenoir was born.

"R. H. BANKS, M. D.

"If there is not evidence of bribery in that," commented Morton, "I do not know what the word means."

Two druggists testified that they had often put up prescriptions for Doctor Banks, and that the above receipt was in his handwriting, so the court ordered that it should be filed among the papers of the case.

"Now, gentlemen," continued Alva's lawyer, "we will see what the good Father Hubert, who was deceived into baptizing the quadroon's child as Fred Lenoir, the son of Robert and Catalina Lenoir, says about the matter."

When the name of Father Hubert was mentioned, a murmur of expectation ran through the crowded court-room, for there was scarcely a person present who did not remember how nobly he stuck to his post during those terrible epidemics which clothe the Crescent City in mourning, nursing the sick and comforting the dying, until he, too, sickened and died, leaving behind him a reputation for unaffected piety and self-sacrificing benevolence, which caused his memory to be revered by all.

A letter purporting to have been written to Colonel Lenoir by Father Hubert in 1822, the year Mrs. Lenoir died, was now shown to several witnesses that professed to be familiar with the priest's handwriting, who all swore that they believed it was written by him, and Alva's counsel read it to the court, as follows:

"NEW ORLEANS, Sept. 22d, 1822.

"COLONEL ROBERT LENOIR:

"My Dear Sir:—On several occasions during the last illness of your wife, she assured me that the boy known as Fred Lenoir was not her son, but the child of the quadroon woman Maria, and begged me to use my utmost endeavors to induce you to repair the wrong done to Mr. Gomez Alva, and if possible to secure the freedom of the boy, who was in no way to be blamed for what was done—"

The rest of the letter need not be given here, as it was simply an earnest appeal to Colonel Lenoir to see that justice was done, couched in such language as Father Hubert, whose



signature it bore, would naturally have used under the circumstances.

The effect produced by this letter on the jury and spectators was unmistakable, and things began to look blue for Fred.

Desirous of weakening, or destroying the impression made before it became fixed, Mr. Harrison arose and said:

"May it please the court, it is a well-established maxim of common law, that 'a man cannot take advantage of his own wrong;' if the papers offered in evidence are genuine—which we are by no means willing to admit—they are the property of my client, and it is incumbent on the plaintiff to prove that he came by them legitimately."

"We are ready to show how these papers came into our possession," replied Alva's lawyer. "Take the stand, Mr. Harrison, and be sworn, if you please, I wish to ask you a few questions."

Fred started when he heard his lawyer asked to take the witness stand, but Mr. Harrison made no objection, and was sworn by the clerk of the court.

"Look at the inside of the cover of this memorandum book and tell me what you see written there," said Morton.

Mr. Harrison opened the book handed to him, and read aloud:

"Presented to Colonel Robert Lenoir, by Wm. Harrison"

"Is that your writing?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you give that book to Colonel LeLnoir?"

"I did."

"Was the statement of moneys received, and expended for him, on the first three pages, written by you?"

"It was."

"Look through the book, and, if you know, tell who made the other entries in it."

"Colonel Lenoir made those on the fourth and fifth pages, for I saw him do it," Mr. Harrison said, "and the others seem to be in his hand-writing."

"You are positive about the fourth and fifth pages?"

"Yes."

"That is all Mr. Harrison."

An expert in writing was then placed on the witness stand, who having first carefully compared the writing in two papers handed him by Alva's counsel, with the entries made by Colonel Lenoir in the memorandum book, stated under oath that they were all in the same handwriting.

"The contents of the papers proved by the expert in writing to be in the handwriting of Colonel Robert Lenoir," said Alva's lawyer, taking up one of them, "is as follows," and he read:

"STATE OF OHIO,  
COUNTY OF HAMILTON, AND CITY OF  
CINCINNATI.

SS.

"Personally appeared before me, the undersigned notary public, in and for the said state, county, and city, Colonel Robert Lenoir, who, being first duly sworn, saith: That in the year 1817, in order to secure to himself the estate left by Juan Alva, he conspired with one Doctor R. H. Banks to pass off as the child of himself and wife the son of a quadroon slave, named Maria, and that Father Hubert, a Catholic priest, being deceived as to the parentage of said infant, baptized him by the name of Frederick Lenoir, which name he has since borne, and been generally believed to be the son of the affiant. The aforesaid Robert Lenoir furthermore saith: That his wife, Catalina, died without ever having given birth to a child.

"In witness whereof, he hereunto sets his hand and seal.

"ROBERT LENOIR.

"That is a miserable forgery," whispered Fred to Mr. Harrison; "it is dated after my father's death."

"Hush," replied Mr. Harrison, "let us hear what he has to say."

"The other paper pronounced by the expert to have been written by Colonel Robert Lenoir," said Alva's counsel, taking it off the table, "is a letter to my client, Gomez Alva, which the jury can examine at their leisure, but I will not read at length, as it is to a considerable extent a repetition of what has already been proved.

"After reciting the particulars of the fraud, and stating that he came south determined to defend the suit against him to the bitter end, the noble colonel goes on to state, that while returning from Cincinnati, where he went to have the quadroon woman, Maria, secreted, so that my client could not find her, he was accused of swindling in a game of cards, and in an encounter which followed, received a wound in the left shoulder.

"Afterwards, when somewhat intoxicated, while going from Guion's landing to the Alva plantation—then regarded as his own—he had an altercation with two unknown men which resulted in a fight, during which he was shot through one of his lungs, but succeeded in getting into the residence at the plantation, in—as he thought—a dying condition.

"That just at that time the water from the crevasse began to inundate the country, and his pretended son Fred—who in the encounter on the road, proved himself to be a perfect poltroon—in the most unfeeling and dastardly manner fled, leaving him to his fate, without even stopping long enough to bind up his wounds, or give him a drink of water, though he begged for it, as he was consumed with thirst produced by his wound; and was so weak from loss of blood, that he could not stir from the bed upon which he fell when he entered the house."

At this point a roar of indignation arose in the court-room, and contemptuous and angry glances were cast on Fred from all sides.

"That is a base, infernal lie!" cried Fred, springing to his feet, and starting towards Morton.

"Silence in court!" thundered the judge, and Mr. Harrison and a deputy sheriff got hold of Fred, and partly by force induced him to keep quiet.

So thoroughly and artfully had the evidence for Gomez Alva been prepared and brought before the court, that nearly everyone believed that his claim was just, while a mingled feeling of contempt and execration was aroused against Fred and his father.

Mr. Harrison having been disappointed in getting Colonel Lenoir's papers, which he had depended on entirely, hoped there might be a chance to pick a flaw in the evidence of the plaintiff, but failing in that, he was now at his wits' end; turning to Fred, he whispered:

"My boy, it is as I told you it would be; there is no hope for you."

"Put me on the stand," returned Fred.

"What for? You cannot swear of your own knowledge who your mother was."

"I want to correct what was said about my father, and my treatment to him."

Mr. Harrison thereupon had Fred sworn, and told him to state anything he knew about the case.

But when Fred began to tell about the fight with the robbers and his father's death, he was hooted at by the spectators to such an extent, in spite of all the officers of the court could do, that he had to abandon the attempt.



## CHAPTER XXI.

THE DEAD ALIVE—AT LAST THE CASE IS TRIED.

When the foreman of the jury announced that they were ready to give a verdict in favor of Gomez Alva, the judge directed the clerk of the court to call the roll of the jurors.

While this was being done, the gaze which Gomez and Garcia Alva fixed on Fred was perfectly diabolical.

During the trial Fred had heard his father and mother denounced as swindlers, and himself pronounced a coward, and now he knew that the jury were about to decide that he was a slave.

But folding his arms across his heart, he glared from face to face in stern and fearless indignation, and his enemies shrank from the terrible expression of his bright eye, as though it had been fraught with blighting fire.

Nor was Fred's demeanor under the circumstances, unnatural; he felt that he would rather die than not, but had fully determined not to die unavenged; therefore he did not dread the future.

When the last juror answered his name, everyone leaned forward and listened in breathless expectation to hear the verdict.

Just at that moment when the silence was so profound that it was absolutely painful, Bandy—who had edged his way into the court, and listened to the trial with an all-absorbing interest, though he did not understand half he heard—cried out, in a loud voice:

"Bress de Lord! Dar's old massa, hisself!"

This announcement thrilled through the audience like an electric shock.

Every eye instinctively turned towards the door and rested upon the tall, soldierly figure of Colonel Robert Lenoir, who had just entered.

The crowd, which filled every available space, made way for him, and, followed by the quadroon woman, Maria, he advanced to Fred and Mr. Harrison, and shook hands with them.

During the disturbance caused by Colonel Lenoir's entrance, Garcia Alva slipped out of the court room so quietly that his departure was not even noticed by his friends.

So great was the revulsion in Fred's feelings on seeing his father—who for weeks he had thought was dead—that he could not utter a word, and was scarcely able to stand up.

But Mr. Harrison had better command of his feelings.

"Thank heavens, colonel, you are alive!" he ejaculated; "but have you got your papers?"

"Yes," was the reply, "there they are," and taking a package from the breast pocket of his coat, the colonel handed it to Mr. Harrison, who arose and said:

"May it please your honor, I have new and important evidence which I wish to submit to the court before this case is decided."

Alva's lawyer objected to them.

The affidavit and letter said to have been sent by him from Cincinnati, the receipt with Dr. Bank's name signed to it, and the letter purporting to have been written by Father Hubert, were then shown to him, and he was asked if he had ever seen them before.

To the astonishment of Mr. Harrison, the colonel replied, after examining the papers:

"I have."

"Where?" inquired Mr. Harrison.

"In the den of some robbers who have kept me a prisoner for the last few weeks."

"How did the papers happen to be there?"

"They are all forgeries. One of the robbers did the work; afterward they were shown to me, and I was told what use would be made of them."

"What became of the robbers?"

"Ha! there are some of them now. Arrest those men!" cried the colonel, pointing to Brian and three of the robbers, who had risen from their seats, with a view of sneaking out of the court.

In an instant the court room was in a perfect blaze of excitement.

The sheriff and his deputies, assisted by some of the spectators, quickly surrounded three of the robbers, and secured them.

But Brian, with pistol in one hand, and a knife in the other, caused those in his immediate vicinity to recoil.

He drew the weapons, intending to fight his way out of the court room, but a single glance at the dense throng between him and the door, showed that this was impossible.

Instead of surrendering, however, the desperate villain leveled his pistol at Colonel Lenoir, who was not more than eight paces from him, and roared out:

"I'll get even with you anyhow!"

At that instant Fred, who, on seeing the danger, his father was exposed to had drawn a pistol, fired.

Pierced through the eye and brain by the bullet, Brian lurched heavily to one side and fell, and as he did so, his pistol went off, inflicting a ghastly wound in the stomach of Gomez Alva, who sank back in a chair, shrieking with agony.

Gomez Alva was sent to a hospital, and the corps of Brian placed in one of the ante-rooms to await the action of the coroner.

Then, to the infinite disgust of Alva's lawyer, the judge ordered the trial should go on.

The further proceedings in the case, however, were a mere matter of form, for after the papers put in evidence by Alva were proved to be forgeries, Colonel Lenoir's testimony and Fred's baptismal certificate was scarcely needed to satisfy every one that Fred was the son of the colonel and his wife, Catalina.

Without leaving their seats, the jury gave a verdict in favor of the Lenoirs, and its announcement was received by the spectators with deafening cheers.

While testifying, Colonel Lenoir gave a true account of the fight with the robbers, and now the audience who hooted at Fred not two hours before regarded him as a perfect hero.

Colonel Lenoir was still weak from the effect of his wounds, and as soon as he, Fred, and Mr. Harrison could get away from the enthusiastic crowd, they proceeded to a hotel, accompanied by Maria and Bandy.

We will not relate what happened to Colonel Lenoir during the time Fred thought he was dead.

It will be remembered that after sending Fred away, he tore the bandages off his wounds, intending to die rather than fall into the hands of the Alvas alive.

The wound in his shoulder, however, scarcely bled at all, and when he removed the bandage from the place where the ball pierced his side and penetrated his left lung, he unconsciously did exactly what a surgeon, desirous of saving his life, would have done under the circumstances.

The blood being allowed to flow freely, caused Colonel Lenoir to faint, and then coagula formed in the wounds and stopped the blood.

Finding him in a swoon when he returned to the house, Fred supposed that he was dead, and left him.

But the next night when the robbers broke into the house, to escape from the sinking trading boat, Garcia Alva searched his body for the memorandum about the papers, and discovered that he was still alive.

After plundering the house, Garcia Alva, Bill Brian and their companions left in a skiff—which was on the trading



boat, but did not sink with it—and carried Colonel Lenoir with them, to a large double cabin, which the robbers had in the swamp near Lake Pontchartrain.

Actuated by a fiendish desire to humble Colonel Lenoir, and then torture him to death, Garcia Alva had him carefully nursed, and he rapidly regained his strength.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### CONCLUSION.

Having Colonel Lenoir in his power made Garcia Alva conclude that he had the game pretty much in his own hands.

The first thing he did was to have one of his gang, who could imitate any kind of writing write a note in Colonel Lenoir's name to Maria, requesting her to come to Louisiana.

This note was sent to Cincinnati by Brian, and he acted his part so well that the quadroon woman returned with him, and was carried to the robber's cabin in the swamp before she discovered that she had been imposed upon.

Garcia then threatened to kill her, if she did not tell him where she hid Colonel Lenoir's papers.

She pretended to comply, but deceived him, and when he searched for and failed to find them, he concluded that Fred had already secured them.

The next morning, at daylight, Garcia Alva, Brian, and all of the robbers except Murphy and Gus Smith, who were left in charge of the cabin, went to New Orleans.

Believing that his father would soon be in possession of the Lenoir estate, Garcia Alva, for several weeks past, had made no secret of his intention to leave the robbers and, as he expressed it, "live like a gentleman."

There was a considerable amount of money and other valuables secreted in the cabin, and when they were left together, Smith determined to murder Murphy, seize the plunder and decamp.

Watching his opportunity (about two hours after the others left), Smith plunged his knife in Murphy's back, inflicting a severe but not mortal wound.

Murphy turned, and in attempting to grapple received a stab in the breast which was fatal, and he fell to the floor; but after he was down drew a pistol from his belt and shot Smith dead.

This occurred in a room which was used as a kitchen and dining-room, and in the presence of Maria, who had been installed as cook.

Seeing that Smith was dead, and Murphy dying, Maria at once released Colonel Lenoir, who armed himself, and with her hastened away from the place.

Following an obscure path they reached the lake, put off in an old canoe, and were lucky enough to soon fall in with a fisherman in a sail boat, who, on being promised a liberal reward, soon landed them at the Lenoir residence.

Ordering his carriage, and securing the papers, which Maria readily found, the colonel proceeded directly to Mr. Harrison's office in New Orleans.

Learning from a clerk that his case was probably then being tried, he hurried to the court room, where he arrived—as before related—just in the nick of time, to prevent the suit from being decided against him.

Five days after the trial all visited Mrs. Lenoir's grave, and were just leaving the gate of the Catholic cemetery, when they met a funeral procession.

"I wonder who's dead?" said the colonel. "What a beautiful girl that is in the first carriage."

Fred looked at the carriage indicated, and all the blood in his body flew to his face—the girl his father spoke of was Anita.

She was dressed in deep mourning, for the funeral was that of Gomez Alva, who died two days before, from the effects

of the wound caused by the accidental discharge of Brian's pistol.

Fred bowed to her, and she returned the salutation, though her brother, Carlos, who had apparently regained his health, and was seated by their side, evidently objected to her doing so.

Fred did not press the matter further at the time, but the next day he wrote a letter to Garcia Alva, asking for the hand of Anita, and suggesting that the quarrel between the two families might thus be settled.

He received a reply written by Carlos Alva, spurning his offer, and filled with the grossest abuse.

Without saying anything about either of the letters, Fred made up his mind that he would run away with Anita.

But, as it happened, there was no necessity for him to put this plan into operation.

One of the three men who were arrested in the court turned State's evidence, and a strong body of men were sent to the cabin in the swamp to capture the robbers, but the birds had flown.

A watch was then kept on the Alva residence, and one stormy night, before a week had passed, Garcia ventured home, was seen, and the house surrounded.

When summoned to surrender, however, he and Carlos darted out of the back door, struck down all who opposed them, reached a canoe, and shoved off, though the lake was white with foam, and the waves were running fearfully high.

For a few minutes—by the almost incessant flashes of lightning—the canoe was seen looking like a small black spot on the storm-lashed surface of the lake, then a huge wave, towering high in the air, burst over it, and it was seen no more.

Three days afterwards the swollen and blackened corpses of Garcia and Carlos were washed ashore within fifty yards of each other.

On seeing the bodies when they were borne to the house, Garcia's wife, a delicate, sickly woman, whose spirit had long since been broken by unkindness and neglect, fell into convulsions, from which she never recovered.

Anita was thus left all alone in the world.

But it was not long before she came to regard Colonel Lenoir as a father, and in the deep, unswerving devotions of Fred, whom she loved with all her heart, she found consolation and happiness.

After a reasonable time for mourning had passed, she wreathed her hair with orange flowers, and the old family feud was ended forever by the last of the Alvas becoming the bride of Fred Lenoir.

### THE END.

Read "THE WINNING TEAM; OR, FOOTBALL FRANK, THE CHAMPION," By Howard Austin, which will be the next number (643) of "Pluck and Luck."

**SPECIAL NOTICE.** All back numbers of this weekly except the following are in print: 1 to 8, 10 to 25, 27, 29 to 36, 38 to 40, 42, 43, 48 to 51, 53 to 55, 57 to 60, 62, 64, 66 to 69, 71 to 73, 75, 81, 84 to 86, 88, 89, 92 to 94, 99, 100, 102, 105, 107, 109, 110, 116, 119, 124 to 126, 132, 140, 163, 166, 171, 179 to 181, 212, 216, 239, 247, 257, 265, 268, 277. If you cannot obtain the ones you want from any newsdealer, send the price in money or postage stamps by mail to FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 24 UNION SQUARE, New York, and you will receive the copies you order by return mail.



# Pluck and Luck

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## BRIEF, BUT POINTED.

A mussel fisher working in the Ohio River near Jeffersonville, Ill., found an almost perfect pearl, which weighs thirty-six grains, which he sold to Louisville jewelers. Several months ago the same firm bought a large pearl, found in the Ohio, for \$300 and sold it to a New York firm for \$3,000. The gem was not nearly so perfect in size and color as the one just found.

It is reported by the Engineering Agency of South Africa, Johannesburg, that an important body of iron ore has been found in Natal, within thirty miles of the railway and within seventy-five miles of the coast. Limestone has been located in large quantities at a distance of only a mile from the ore body, and coking coal has also been discovered in Natal. In view of the fact that the River Tegela, which is suitable for the development of hydro-electric power, runs through the iron ore property, it is likely that the new find will be turned to immediate commercial account.

The removal of the twelve-year-old, twenty-story Gillender Building at Wall and Nassau Streets in New York city is certainly a record in house-wrecking. The time allowed was 45 days at a price of \$50,000, with a penalty of \$500 for every day exceeding that period. The work will be done within the specified time. The most difficult work has been the removal of the brick backing of the outside stone work. The steel frame was taken down, piece by piece, by knocking off the heads of the rivets and driving the latter out with a drift pin. The steel work will be available for other construction.

To meet the competition of thousands of miles of new inter-urban electric lines the railroads of the Middle West are adding to their steam rolling stock many mile-a-minute gasoline motor cars for "local service." These have the sharply pointed prows of a racing motor boat and their windows are like portholes. The doors are at the sides. Each one has seats for fifty-six. The installation of these cars has put new business life into many towns that formerly had the benefit of only one or two passenger trains a day, and has gladdened the heart of many a suburbanite who had been denying himself the pleasure of the theaters because he couldn't afford to sit up until 2 a. m. to get a train for home.

The pomegranate was known from the earliest times. It is only in Northern India that it is found in a truly wild state.

It is hardy, and in this country often bears fruit as far north as the Ohio River and Maryland, if not farther. Indeed, it is stated that even in the climate of this city, if trained upon a wall or trellis in a sheltered place and covered during the winter, it will bear, and in some seasons ripen its fruit. The neighborhood of Augusta, Ga., has been celebrated for the excellence of its pomegranates, which also grow in great perfection in Northern Mexico, where a large share of the crop is used in distilling aguardiente, a very fiery brandy. The fresh bark of the root has been long known as a good vermifuge, and is used to expel tapeworms.

## OUR COMIC COLUMN.

"Take dinner with us to-morrow, count." "Could you not make it breakfast? I have numerous invitations to dinner each week, but I cannot live on ze one meal a day."

"Jimmy, you ought to play funny tricks, like the Katzenjammer Kids." "I can't think of nuthin' funny, Mr. Nexdore." "You might drop your father's lawn mower down the well."

Mr. Easy—Cheer up, Mr. Peck. If we must go down, let's go cheerfully like men. Mr. Peck—But, hang it all, Mr. Easy, if I don't get home my wife will never let me go fishing again, never.

"How do you like living in a prohibition town?" "First rate," answered Col. Stillwell. "I have several neighbors that I don't think much of, and I positively enjoy seeing them go thirsty."

He came into the office and said: "You see, my brothers are shoemakers, and they mended my shoes. Now, why am I like Joseph of Biblical history?" We gave it up. "Why, because I was soled by my brothers." The inquest on him will be held to-day.

"You say Mr. Hickey is a relation of yours?" said a police magistrate who was questioning a witness. "What relation is he?" "Patrick Hickey, sur." "No, no; how nearly is he related to you?" "Och, faith, he came near marrying my sister once," replied the witness.

"What is the baby crying about, Maggie?" "I don't know, mamma." "And what are you looking so indignant about?" "That naughty dog's been and took and eat my sponge-cake." "Why, I saw you eating sponge-cake just a minute ago!" "Oh, that was baby's!"

Some soldiers were digging a well. When they came to the water the commanding officer went to inspect progress. "Well, Kelly," said he to the Irishman at the bottom of the well, "you have found the water at last?" "Ah, kurnel," replied the other, "it all depinds upon knowing how the thing ought to be done. Any other man but myself would have gone forty fut deeper without coming to it."

Scene—The gambling table at Monte Carlo. Personæ—Young English lady with little sister and a gentleman whose acquaintance they have made at the hotel. Young Lady—"Oh, I say, I shall put a five-franc piece on the number of my age!" putting one on 18. Number 28 wins. Little Sister—"What fun! Now, if you had really put it on your right age, sis, you would have won, wouldn't you?"



## FOUR CARDS

By Horace Appleton.

"I am sure I heard a groan, Paul."

Ethel Chartis' hand tightened its grasp upon her companion's arm, and little apprehensive shivers trembled through her slender, graceful form.

Paul Harvey listened, turning his head toward the roadside, where the drifting snow had heaped itself in a barrier of spotless white, against the evergreen hedge-row, but he heard no sound of human voice.

"It must have been the sound of the wind moaning through the old elms yonder, Ethel. You are a trifle nervous to-night, I think," he said lightly.

"Perhaps I am, and why should I not be, for are you not agoing home with me to-night to ask papa if—if——"

"If he will give me his dearest treasure—yourself, my dear Ethel," replied Paul, completing the sentence, while a charming blush suffused the sweet face at his side.

From the hour of their first meeting Ethel and the young cashier had been drawn to each other by a subtle attraction, which had developed into a romantic attachment and betrothal.

They were returning, this winter's night, from a social gathering at the residence of a mutual friend, in the suburbs of the New England town of Amherst, and it was almost eleven by the clock in the dome of the town hall.

The young lovers had paused for a moment during the foregoing conversation, and the white flakes fell gently upon them while the winter's wind sighed mournful requiems among the elms by the wayside.

They were passing onward again, when a sound which both heard this time caused them to pause again.

"You were not mistaken, Ethel. That sound was certainly uttered by a human creature in distress!" said Paul, quickly.

Paul plunged into the snow-drift beside the hedge, and in a moment he stumbled upon the prostrate form of a man who lay half buried in the snow.

The man was an entire stranger to Paul and Ethel, as they discovered as the young cashier lifted him in his arms and bore him out into the highway, where they saw his face.

He was a young man with a thin, anxious-looking face, now perfectly livid in its ghastly pallor. His attire was shabby and utterly unsuited to the cold, inclement weather. A pitiful moan escaped his lips as Paul supported him in his arms, but he was unable to speak.

And then in his strong arms he carried the wayfarer who had fallen by the way homeward, and in his mother's humble home the vital spark that yet slumbered in the poor wail's bosom was stimulated into flame. The stranger's life was saved, so Paul's good mother said, and leaving him to her gentle ministrations Paul escorted Ethel to her home.

But the lateness of the hour now precluded Paul's seeking an interview with Mr. Chartis that evening, and he returned homeward, wondering about the unknown stranger whom he had saved.

And little did Paul think that the deed of humanity which he had that night accomplished was to have a deep influence upon his future, and that the time was coming when he would be confronted by an awful and unforeseen crisis in his destiny.

But such was the truth which as yet the mystic veil of maturity hid from the young man's vision.

The succeeding morning the rescued man was able to con-

verse, though still in an exceedingly weak condition, and he told Paul a story of himself substantially as follows:

The stranger's name was Stephen Pembert. He was homeless and a stranger in a strange land. He had been unfortunate—though just how he did not say. He had found himself penniless and in ill health while in the city of Boston, and he had set out on foot to seek employment in the country. He had fallen exhausted and fainting in the snow, and he was convinced that he would have perished there had it not been for Paul's timely succor.

Stephen Pembert spoke with a slight accent, which served to convince Paul that he was an Englishman, though the man did not mention his nationality.

"I am only a poor outcast—a tramp, if you will—and perhaps it would have been better if you had left me to die. I have been the arbiter of my own destiny, and you see what I have made of my life—a wreck. But if I live, and I can ever render you a service, I will do so, even at the cost of the miserable life that you have saved."

Stephen Pembert's language bespoke for him a certain degree of education and refinement, and there was that, too, in his manner which repelled any questions of idle curiosity, and Paul did not seek to learn more of the stranger's history than he voluntarily told.

The stranger rapidly recovered, and when he had regained his wonted strength he said he would go away again; and then, in kindly solicitude, Paul asked: "What are your plans for the future, my friend?"

"I have none," answered Pembert bitterly.

"See here, my friend, you are not taking a proper view of life. Why, man, the battle has just opened for you, and yet you are ready to accept defeat. I do not ask what you may have done in the past, but I am satisfied you have committed no crime."

"No, no," answered Pembert, with eager earnestness.

"Then begin anew. Bury the past, which causes you remorse and bitterness of spirit, turn a new leaf, and I assure you all may yet be well with you."

"If I could only think so," answered Pembert, doubtfully.

"You must think so. Come, I will help you to honest employment. It is humble, indeed, but it will do for you until something better can be found. I know that old Abner Wade, a strange old resident of our town, but of considerable reputed wealth, is in want of a man-of-all-work. I am in the old fellow's good graces, and I am quite confident that I can secure the place for you if you will accept it."

"Thank you. I must earn my bread. I will work at anything," answered Pembert.

"That's the right spirit. Now, I'll be off and see Wade about employing you," replied Paul.

He hastened to do so, and half an hour later found him in conversation with "old" Abner Wade, as he was generally designated, in the eccentric old gentleman's kitchen at his old-fashioned house in the edge of the town.

Wade was a most singular character, miserly, taciturn as a usual thing, and—strange combination of peculiarities—a confirmed gambler and expert card-player. The old man held card-parties in the old kitchen of his house almost every night those long winter evenings, and there such of the townsmen of his acquaintance who were fond of the game of draw poker were wont to assemble before the great open fire-place, where the table was always placed, and court the fickle goddess of chance. Considerable sums of money changed hands in the old kitchen sometimes, and play ran quite high upon occasion. It was a notable fact, moreover, that in the end old Abner Wade was always the heavy winner. Yet no one ever thought of accusing the old fellow of cheating, and the most expert



card-player in the company declared he played a strictly honest game.

Now, Paul Harvey was passionately fond of play. Cards had a resistless fascination for the young man, and games of chance were his delight. So characteristic was this peculiarity that it seemed he must have inherited the passion.

So it had come about that Paul had occasionally dropped in to take a hand in the social game at old Abner Wade's, for the gentlemen who played there were men of good standing and fit associates for the young cashier.

But Paul well knew the danger of the temptation to which he sometimes yielded, and he battled against it, more than once promising himself that he would play no more.

Among Paul's stanchest friends, however, was one Dick Burton, the sheriff of the county, and one of the most genial, whole-souled fellows in the world. Burton was very fond of cards, and without thinking that he was doing his friend harm he frequently urged him to accompany him to Wade's.

Thus at the card-table Paul had made the acquaintance of Abner Wade, and, indeed, if the truth be told, to his cost, too, for he had lost considerable sums there at one time and another.

Abner Wade had always treated Paul with great friendliness, and when the young cashier told him the story of Stephen Pembert, and besought for that unfortunate young man the situation which he knew to be vacant, Wade readily assented, saying:

"I am glad to help any one you take an interest in. My dear Mr. Harvey, you may send the man here to-day and he can commence his duties at once."

Stephen Pembert began work at Abner Wade's that day, and meanwhile, before he started for Boston, chance gave Paul just the opportunity he sought to ask of Mr. Chartis the hand of his only daughter.

The banker smiled as he listened to Paul's ardent plea, and he did not seem in the least surprised or offended, nor was he so, for he had watched the growing intimacy between Paul and Ethel with silent approval.

"My dear Paul," said Mr. Chartis, when the young man had concluded, "all this is no secret to me. I have seen for some time past that you and Ethel are deeply attached, and I freely give my consent to your union. I am satisfied that you will make your way in the world, and I would rather see Ethel your wife, since you are a man of the strictest honesty, than wed her to one of larger means regarding whose character there was a doubt, for I have always vowed that Ethel should wed no one upon whose honor the least shadow of suspicion had fallen."

Paul's delight may be imagined, and he hastened to tell Ethel the glad fruition of their hopes, and then he set out for Boston.

The business which occasioned Paul's visit to the city was to collect eight thousand dollars which was due the Amherst bank, and he had been instructed to bring the money home with him that evening.

"But should I not return until after the bank is closed what shall I do with the money over night?" Paul had asked of Mr. Chartis.

"Bring it to my house and place it in my private safe until morning," Mr. Chartis had replied.

It so happened that Paul was unable to obtain the money in the city until it was too late to catch any homeward bound train, save one that would arrive at Amherst at nine p. m.

But with the money safe in his pocket Paul alighted from the train at the Amherst depot at that hour in the evening, and he started at once for Mr. Chartis' house to deposit the money for the night.

Paul was walking swiftly along the street near old Abner

Wade's house, when he came face to face with Dick Burton, the county sheriff.

"Well, well, this is a lucky meeting, Harvey. I was just looking for you. I want you to go over to old Wade's and help us make up a four-handed game. Come along. I won't take no for an answer, and you need not stay more than an hour," said Burton, making the last persuasive remark as he observed that Paul was about to decline.

The young cashier hesitated. But Burton overpersuaded him, against his better judgment, for inclination was on Burton's side. Paul went with him, saying to himself:

"I'll go to Mr. Chartis before ten o'clock—a half an hour's time or so will not matter."

That night the play at Abner Wade's ran high, and Paul lost and lost again, until all his own money was gone. He had been induced to drink by Wade until he had lost all caution.

He reeled to the door, his face the picture of terror and despair.

"What have I done? I am ruined and Ethel is lost to me forever! I am a thief!"

And at that moment a hand fell upon his shoulder. Turning quickly he beheld Stephen Pembert standing at his side.

"I heard what you said when you left Abner Wade's house. I was asleep in the room adjoining the kitchen and your voice awakened me. I know all and I ask you to pause and listen to one who has suffered the same terrible experience that has befallen you now. The night you found me in the snow by the roadside I came from a gambling house in Boston, where I had lost the last dollar of a fine inheritance. You saved me then, give me a chance to save you now."

The strong will of Stephen Pembert conquered.

Stephen led him homeward, and then went back to Abner Wade's house and admitted himself.

As Stephen passed the table at which the gamblers of the evening had sat he brushed aside a handkerchief which lay there, and four cards which the cloth had concealed were exposed to view.

"He has robbed Paul outright. But he shall make restitution—I swear he shall—or I'll ruin him! Why, the scoundrel by the backs of these cards could tell just what Paul held as though he looked directly," cried Stephen.

Then he snatched up the four cards, and strode to Abner Wade's sleeping room. The old gambler and card sharp had retired, and he started up fiercely as Stephen entered, and demanded:

"What do you want here?"

"Paul Harvey's money, of which you robbed him by means of a pack of marked cards! I have secured four of them as proof. Burton and the other man will recognize these four cards as a part of the pack you provided for the evening's game. Come, the money, I say, or by all that's good I'll have you under arrest in half an hour!" fairly thundered Stephen Pembert.

The subtle consciousness of detected guilt made Wade a coward, and with many imprecations and threats of vengeance against Stephen he drew a huge mass of bills from under his pillow, and flung them at Stephen's head.

With a glad heart Stephen sped away to Paul with the recovered money, and an hour later it was safe in Mr. Chartis' safe.

Paul never touched a card or a drop of intoxicating liquor in all his life after that, and sweet Ethel, who soon became his happy bride, never knew how near she came to losing a husband. As for Stephen Pembert, his future proved a success after all. Paul secured him a clerkship in the bank, and years after he and Paul were business partners in a great banking firm of their own.



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